Cat-Gut Jim the Fiddler

Ned Corvan's Life & Songs

Dave Harker

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Wisecrack Publications

www.mrcorvansmusichall.co.uk/

For Ned Corvan's great-grandson,
Joseph Wilkes

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Contents

Introduction		v
Acknowledgments		vi
1	Edward Corvin	1
2	The publican fiddlers	8
3	Edward Corven	16
4	*£4. 10s.*	26
5	The Royal Olympic Concert Hall	38
6	Edward Corvan	46
7	*Corvan's Song Books*	57
8	Mr Corvan's Music Hall	70
9	Cat-Gut Jim	79
10	The everlasting Ned Corvan	87
11	*Who Hung the Monkey?*	95
12	The Tyne Concert Hall	105
13	Eighteen stamps	116
14	Thomas Allan	130
15	The Grim Reaper	140
16	Thy sympathies were keen and strong	148
17	A good cutter	157
18	Under the tarmac	164
References		171
Sources		181
Recordings		184
Song, Tune & Verse Index		185
Name Index		188

Introduction

Ned Corvan was the most significant Tyneside singer-songwriter of the mid-19th century, yet he is hardly known today, even in Newcastle. He was born into the Corvin family in Liverpool on 30 October 1827, but they were living in Newcastle by the early 1830s. Edward's father, Matthew, was a stonemason and almost certainly helped to build Richard Grainger's new streets, but he died in 1841, leaving a widow and three children. 'Ned' had some formal education, probably at the Jubilee School above Sandgate, and he was apprenticed to a sail-maker in the early 1840s, but by 1848, if not before, he had run away to join Billy Purvis's 'strolling players'. By 1849 Ned had learned skills like scene-painting, fiddling and song writing, and had begun to get singing engagements when Purvis's show was off the road over winter. In 1850 'Edward Corven' published a small songbook, and in 1851 he published two songs on one sheet in support of the Tyne seamen who had gone on strike for a living wage. Soon after he married a woman of independent means, Isabella Arrowsmith, the illiterate daughter of a mariner, in Christ Church, North Shields. In 1853 Corven was a hit at the Royal Olympic Concert Hall, which held 2,800 people near Newcastle Central Station, and became the region's first full-time professional singer-songwriter.

Late in 1854 'Mr. Edward Corvan' ran the Fairles' Arms Music Saloon in Wapping Street, South Shields, and his wife evidently provided the capital, but in 1857 she put it up for sale. Corvan went back on the road with his signature song, *Cat-Gut Jim*, *the Fiddler*, and evidently lived at John Balmbra's Wheat Sheaf Inn in Newcastle's Cloth Market for a time. In 1859 he wrote and sang *Who Hung the Monkey?* in Hartlepool, then had an engagement in London, but that was not a success, and he returned to the north east. By 1861 he and Isabella lived with their three children in Sunderland; and in 1862 George Stanley engaged Corvan for the revamped Olympic, now known as the Tyne Concert Hall. His *The Queen Has Sent a Letter* commemorated the deaths of 204 men and boys at Hartley Colliery, after the single shaft was blocked. The song made him popular across the Northumberland Durham coalfields, but he was evidently not 'respectable' enough for the newer, larger music halls, whose proprietors engaged performers from London and the USA. Corvan had to sell manuscript copies of his songs for postage stamps, so he could write off for engagements, and he found work as far away as Leeds and Dundee. He returned to Tyneside late in 1864, but he had tuberculosis of the larynx, which made singing difficult, and he relied mainly on patter, fiddling and drawing famous people's faces on blackboards. By spring 1865 his voice had almost gone and he had to stop working. His fellow artists organised a benefit, but he died on 31 August, aged 37, and narrowly escaped the worst form of pauper's grave.

Corvan had written sketches, recitations, and at least 120 songs, though not all can be traced. Thomas Allan, the Newcastle stationer, had bought some of the dying man's copyrights, and he probably bought more from his widow. Allan published some of Corvan's less socially-contentious lyrics, but changed the words to suit his Tory and teetotal tastes. Several of Corvan's songs were cherished after his death, but members of his audiences died and first-hand memories of most songs faded away.

Corvan used tunes associated with England, Scotland, Ireland and the USA. None of them were published with his lyrics in his lifetime, but in the early 1910s the freemason and former music hall singer Charles Ernest Catcheside, using his stage name of 'Catcheside-Warrington', wrote piano arrangements for three of Allan's mediated versions of Corvan's lyrics, and James Gale Windows published them in Newcastle. There were evidently no commercial recordings of Corvan's songs in the 1910s, 1920s or 1930s, but *The Cullercoats Fishwife* was field-recorded in Canada in 1944. Fred Lawson's 78rpm shellac disc of that song was released in Britain in 1950 and Dennis Weatherley recorded *The Caller* for the BBC in the 1950s, but the tape reportedly went into a skip. John Woodvine's rendition of part of *The Toon Improvement Bill* was released in 1971, Barry Canham recorded *Fire on the Kee* in 1972 and Keith Gregson included 39 tunes and lyrics in *Corvan. A Victorian Entertainer and his Songs* in 1983. Tom McConville recorded *Cat-Gut Jim the Fiddler* in 1999, the year that J.G. Windows' songbooks went out of print, and Johnny Handle & the High Level Ranters recorded *Ye're Gannin' To Be A Keelman* in 2002. Today, only these six Corvan songs seem to have been issued as recordings, but 11 of the 33 published versions are reissues, so almost 100 remain unrecorded.

Today most north-east children have to follow the 'National Curriculum' and focus on the history and culture of London, even though the capital has been parasitic on provincial talent back to William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer and beyond. Few children and young adults know much about the history and culture of their region, though their parents might sing one of Corvan's choruses, without necessarily knowing his name, and their parents might know one or two verses, but few people of any age who are not professional singers seem to know whole songs.

This story of an almost forgotten star includes manuscripts, maps, photographs, newspaper 'clippings' and other illustrations, but some were written or printed quite poorly in the first place, and those that survive are occasionally in an unloved condition. Nevertheless they have been included to give a taste of Corvan's Tyneside and to help to illustrate the ways in which he put everyday social life into the songs that made him famous, and which ought to make him famous again.

The real value of the pound sterling has changed dramatically since Corvan's days. Up to the early 1970s one pound (£1) was equivalent to 20 shillings (20s) of 12 pence (12d), and here is how many pounds it would take today to buy the goods and services that £1 bought at various points in the past.

1820	£87	1860	£110	1900	£111	1940	£50	1980	£4
1830	£103	1870	£107	1910	£106	1950	£31	1990	£2
1840	£92	1880	£108	1920	£40	1960	£21	2000	£1.50p
1850	£121	1890	£116	1930	£59	1970	£14	2010	£1.15p

Acknowledgements

My warm thanks go to Joseph Wilkes, Ned Corvan's great-grandson, for his encouragement and cooperation, Keith Gregson for his financial commitment to the book, John Purves for allowing me to use his wonderful Corvan self-portrait on the cover, Ewan Waugh for photographing people and documents, and Ed Waugh for writing *Mr Corvan's Music Hall*, a play based on this book. Many thanks also to Adam Bell, Catrin Galt, Fiona Hill, George Patterson, Godfrey Mallett, Johnny Handle, Marie-Therèse Mayne, Martin Routledge, Miriam Harte, Paul Baker, Paul Smith, Pete Wood, Ray Stephenson, Sarah Mulligan, Sarah Richardson, Sheila Gammon, Vic Gammon, Vicki Gilbert and Vin Arthey, plus colleagues at Gateshead, Hartlepool, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Shields, South Shields and Sunderland Libraries, Sunderland Antiquarian Society, South Tyneside Council, Hartlepool Museum, South Shields Museum, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, Durham, Northumberland, Teesside and Tyne & Wear Archives, the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle University Library, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the British Newspaper Archive - www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk - and the British Library Board.

Dave Harker
Newcastle upon Tyne
March 2017

1. Edward Corvin

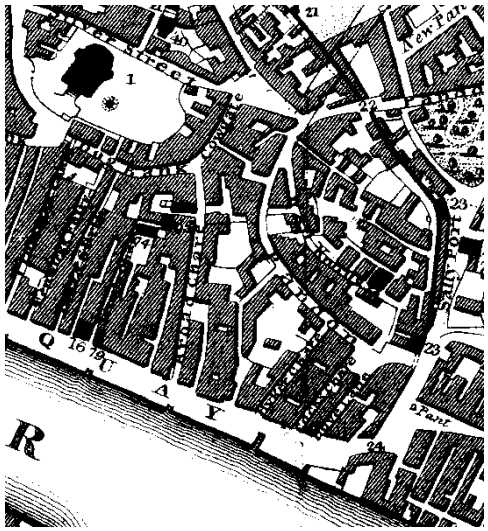
Matthew Corvin was born in Ireland around 1792. He later became a stonemason and married Margaret, who was born around 1794, and in 1826 she bore a son they had christened Thomas. Soon after the family moved to Liverpool, where another son was born on 30 October 1827, and on 7 November Father Thomas Fisher baptised him Edward in St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Highfield Street, with Helen Jones as his sponsor.

On 2 January 1831 Matthew and Margaret 'Corvan' had a third son and Father Thomas Fairclough baptised him Matthew in St. Mary's on the 16th, with John Carr and Margaret Culshaw as his sponsors.

1

The family had probably moved to Newcastle by 1832 and lived in the Stockbridge district of All Saints parish.[2] Around 21,000 of the town's 55,000 population lived in that parish and nearby Byker, and many were Irish immigrants.[3]

Forty years earlier a draper built houses at the top of St. Michael's Mount, inside the eastern Town Wall, and the narrow, dog-leg path called Craike's Alley went down to the Stockbridge, the triangular space east of All Saints Church (**1** on the map below). By the 1830s the dwellings in Wall Knoll, the road curving south-east from the east of the Stockbridge, were called Coburg Place and were better than the 'wretched dwelling-houses' up the hill.[4] One Wall Knoll house had a pointed gable.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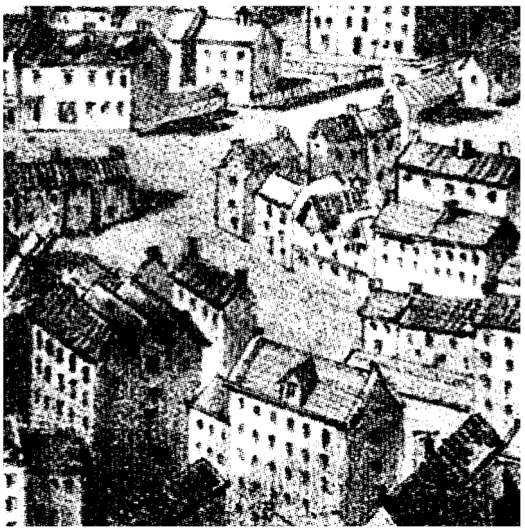
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Many years later a photograph of Wall Knoll from the east of the Stockbridge showed a woman next to a whitewashed arch just beyond the house with a pointed gable, and another showed the entrance to Coburg Stairs and steps up to the Alley.

7

8

Irish people were not always welcome in the region. In February 1833, sailors and Irish labourers fought locals in Hartlepool. One Irishman died and there were serious injuries on both sides;[9] but skilled Irish workers were vital to the building industry.

The Newcastle Quayside porter Thomas Grainger and his wife, the former seamstress Amelia Burt, lived in High Friar's Lane when Richard was born in 1797. He attended St Andrew's Charity School and was apprenticed to a carpenter in 1809. In 1816 he and his brother George, a bricklayer, formed a partnership, and after George died, Richard carried on alone. In 1819 he built houses for a prominent Methodist Alderman and married Rachel Arundale, the daughter of a leather merchant with a dowry of £5,000. By the early 1830s Grainger owned property worth £200,000,[10] and in 1832 he paid £50,000 for Anderson Place, a 12-acre estate in the middle of the town.[11] He bought other property for £45,000, but could not finance new buildings, so in 1834 he moved his legal account to the solicitor's firm run by John Clayton, the town clerk, and the council adopted his scheme.[12] Grainger employed 2,000 workers,[13] including many stonemasons,[14] and began laying out new streets. A large majority of shareholders accepted his plan to demolish the Theatre Royal in Mosley Street and erect a new one, but in June 1835 a new house in Market Street collapsed and four workers died. Another died soon after and two more died later in the Infirmary, but in October the opening of the new Butcher and Vegetable Markets was celebrated with a grand dinner.[15]

Newcastle police continued to keep an eye on Irish people. In 1836 they raided the home of Daniel Duffy in 'Craig's Alley' and found a still with about 100 gallons of 'wash' for making whiskey. Those arrested were fined £30, or three months in jail, but a man who had already experienced a prison treadmill had threatened a policeman with a knife and he would be tried for it after he completed his sentence.[16] There was also solidarity in the Alley. In 1838, when Mr Frost's stables caught fire, the inhabitants put it out.[17] Grainger's building was completed in 1839 at a cost of £646,000,[18] but there were more casualties.

The Infirmary was an impressive building at the top of Forth Banks.

Operations took place on something like a kitchen table,[19] and John Foster Baird, a young surgeon, had no reliable anaesthesia, so he was 'always upset and ill before a serious operation'. In 1840 he stopped a man's carotid artery to minimise the bleeding as he sawed off much of his lower jaw to remove a huge tumour. Afterwards he prescribed 'an opiate, brandy water and beef tea', followed by wine and an enema, but the patient died.[20] Early in 1841 49-year-old Matthew Corvin had an operation,[21] and was sent home, but died on 3 February. Margaret reported the death on the 5th and the Registrar noted that the 'Bricklayer' of 'Coburgh Stairs' died of 'Cancer in lip and mouth', which was associated with working in the sun and using a lot of tobacco and alcohol. Margaret signed the certificate with a cross.

Two
Third of February 1841 at Church Stairs
Matthew Corvin
Male 49 Years
Bricklayer
Cancer in Lip, and Mouth
The X Mark of Margaret Corvin Present at death Coburgh Stairs
Fifth of February 1841
Joseph Pearson Registrar

On the 12th the *Newcastle Courant* reported that 'Corvin' had died on the 5th, and said nothing about his life, while the *Durham County Advertiser* believed he had died on the 2nd, but called him 'Mr Matthew Corvin'.[22]

The population of All Saints parish was almost 19,500 in over 5,000 dwellings.[23] At the top of Craig's Alley Stairs, Thomas Neal kicked a boy called William McCartney in the stomach, and he was too ill to testify for some time.[24] In June Margaret Corvin, a 40-year-old widow, lived in Coburg Stairs with 15-year-old Thomas, an apprentice mason, and Matthew, who age was misrecorded as '8' and his birthplace mistakenly given as Newcastle, but 13-year-old Edward was absent. He later recalled that his mother brought up her children 'with many a hard struggle' on her 'scanty earnings',[25] and at some point he contracted smallpox and his face became pitted.[26] He had some formal education, probably at the Jubilee School above Sandgate, but his mother had 'sair tues' (a struggle) 'to raise the penny for Monday mornins' and the master seldom got it.[27] 'Ned' learned to

read and write, thanks to a much older person, since he often used the old-fashioned long 'f' for 's';[28] but he was 14 in October 1841, and probably became a sail-maker's apprentice soon after.[29]

There were 5,000 Irish people in Northumberland and Durham, but people of Irish heritage were sometimes rowdy.[30] In January 1843, when Robert Owen spoke on socialism in Newcastle, Irishmen broke up the meeting.[31] In June, after a Craig Alley wedding, an Irish girl who was reportedly 'in tatters' and 'disorderly' through drink challenged women to fight. One woman and two men, 'natives of Ireland', appeared before magistrates, who discharged the woman and one man, but fined the man who hit the girl on the head with an iron bar 5s and costs.[32]

The economy of the region, and that of Newcastle, was based on coal-mining, but in April 1844 almost 34,000 pitmen and boys went on strike. They wanted an end to the annual bond, which tied them to one colliery for a year, the abolition of unjust fines, a return to customary rates of pay, a maximum ten-hour days for boys and a procedure for settling disputes. Their trade union, the Miners' Association, employed a Chartist lawyer, William Prowting Roberts, and its headquarters and press were in the Side, Newcastle, where Thomas Dodds published *The Miners' Advocate* and propagandist and agitational songs and verse. The coal owners used blacklegs, many of them from Ireland, plus police, troops and *candymen* (disreputable characters) to evict strikers' families from tied houses, and the strike went down to defeat in August.[33]

In 1845 there was an outbreak of scarlet fever in Newcastle and it was still raging when typhus broke out in 1846. What English people called the 'great Irish fever' caused an extra 900-1,000 deaths a year,[34] and killed many poor Irish people around the Stockbridge,[35] but an official report blamed the victims. It claimed that 'among the lower and lowest classes' there were 'some of the most utterly and recklessly filthy beings that it is possible to conceive' and the situation 'was 'considerably aggravated, if not occasioned, by the irruption of Irish on the failure of the potato crop'. The 'poverty, filth, and bad ventilation' of their homes warranted the 'fear of an epidemic disease being generated' and 'nothing could be more ingeniously adapted for the engendering or disseminating of infection than the tramper's boarding-house' and 'the tenemented dwellings of the lower Irish', where 'fever had its constant home' and 'when aggravated by privation, epidemic influence or other depressing cause, it spread abroad'. No 'material or permanent improvement in the sanitary condition of the town, especially of the poorer districts, appears to have taken place for many years', owing to the ineffective town council, which failed to regulate landlords and was also responsible for about a third of the water used by the poor being taken from the Tyne, which was an open sewer.[36] In October magistrates fined an Irishman 7s 6d and costs for assaulting a woman in Craig Alley Stairs.[37]

In 1847 a surgeon and an army lieutenant lived at 1 and 4 Coburg Place,[38] but cholera broke out in autumn and a surgeon had to step over three corpses at the top of Craig Alley Stairs to 'get at the living'.[39] Freehold nine-room tenements in Coburg Stairs were advertised for sale with 112 square yards of ground 'well adapted for Buildings',[40] but young Ned Corvin escaped.

The travelling showman Billy Purvis was 'King of the Spital' and Ned recalled that he 'wad beg, borrow, or steal to get a luck at aud Billy's backside' (the rear entrance); and, 'smitten with a fancy for the life of an actor', he left his apprenticeship,[41] and 'ran from home with the strolling players'.[42] He played violin in the orchestra, sang 'comic and local songs between the pieces; took his turn at bill-stocking; and made himself generally useful', but 'never made any figure as an actor, his efforts in that line being confined to small parts'.[43] The company criss-crossed northern England and lowland Scotland and encountered other show people at fairs, hoppings, hirings, horse races and other rural and urban events.

The actor Charles Henry Stephenson recalled that early in 1848, when he was a member of Purvis's company, 'two amateur gentlemen belonging to Hartlepool bothered Billy to let them play Grindoff and Lothair in the melodrama of "The Miller and his Men." One was a shoemaker, and the other, I think, was a shipwright'.

> The drama proceeded with varying emotions, interrupted now and again with ejaculations of 'Well done, Lothair'. 'At him again, Grindoff,' and cautions from Billy in the audience, such as 'Had yor tongue! We want nyen o' yor jokes or jibes here!' or, pointing to his wife by his side. 'Lucka, Geordie, mysel an' ma sweet composed canna' hear nowt for yor row: se shoot oop, or by gox aa'll huff some on ye wiv a whap o' the heed; bud aa'll be varry sorry ef aa hev to de owt o' the kind'. 'Sarve em reet, Billy'. 'What are ye gan te hev?' shouted two or three voices. Through this and similar badinage the rival amateurs acted against each other with wonderful vigour until the last scene was reached, when the mill has to be destroyed by an explosion. Up to this point the tempers of the two tragedians had been held in something like subjection by their surroundings, but their jealousy terminated when Purvis declared that 'yen acted as well as the other, and much better'. At this the miller blew up his own mill before the proper time, and then sturdily refused to remain on the stage to be killed by the shoemaker. Before anyone could realise the *crux*, the cobbler, disappointed of his explosion, and having no rival to kill, threw one leg over the river bank set-piece, stretched his arm across the stream, tore down a small working mill fastened to the edge of the painted rock-piece – supposed to be, at least, a quarter of a mile away – rushed down to the footlights, threw the profile toy to the ground, and, placing his foot on it, exclaimed in triumph, 'Noo aa's revenged!' As the curtain descended amid the peals of laughter, Billy – shaking his fist at the destroyer of his property – shouted out, 'Oh, you villain! Aa'll marcycree ye!' By the time Billy got behind the scenes, the offender had, with the help of Ned Corvan and others, made good his escape. Tom Matthews mollified the irate manager, apologised to the audience for the contre-temps, and Purvis finished the night with his inimitable scene of 'Stealing the Bundle'.[44]

Late in June that year a poster announced that Stagshawbank Fair would take place on 4 July, and it gave the times of the trains on the line from Newcastle to Carlisle,[45] which transported farmers and entertainers to near Corbridge.

Seven years earlier the handloom weaver James McKenny and his wife Mary had lived in Caldewgate parish, Carlisle. The census-takers often rounded ages up or down to the nearest five years, and described both as '30', while their daughter was seven. McKenny sometimes helped 'Professor' Scott' – John Henry Anderson - the 'Wizard of the North', but McKenny later had a booth of his own. His hoarse voice would invite the crowd to 'walk up' to see his 'sleight of hand',[46] and he became a 'well-known character' across Cumberland. He 'enlivened the hirings and other meetings' as a 'conjuror of a rollicking kind', being 'deeply versed in sundry secret arts', and he was also a 'drummer extraordinary'.[47] A man in Warwick Bridge was 'amused

to see the way he dressed'. He sometimes 'had a little boy with him in a sort of dancing costume, and sometimes there was a little girl', who McKenny had trained to 'suit his performance with the conjuring box', and he later engaged a small company.

Samuel Jordan recalled that when he was a 'mere sprat', and 'happened to be master of a penny', he would spend a halfpenny on sweets at Nelly Wales' shop and then he and his 'diminutive' pal Joe would 'wend our way to the old 'beaming machine' in Willow Holmes to try to get into McKenny's show with the other halfpenny.

> Jimmy's large-hearted *chargé d'affaires* took pity on us, and pushed us inside behind an old disused dressing barrel near the stage. Once snugly ensconced inside, our hearts beating like a dead lamb's tail … it would have done your heart good if you had seen Joe's eyes sparkle, for you might almost have kindled a match at them.
>
> The show began by a poor tattered tatterdemalion leaping on the stage with an old battered trumpet in his hand. He blew a blast between a fanfare and the screech of a cat in the measles. Addressing the audience (chiefly made up of gutter-snipes like myself, from 5 to 10 years): - 'Ladies and gemmen! The first of my performances shall be dart, and afterwards man dart'. And it certainly was, for he then mizzled [disappeared] behind an old rag curtain. Jimmy next introduced young Bill Adams, the famed fiddler from Dalston, assuring his dear young patron and friends that if they could manage to keep from crying Billy certainly would keep them from laughing. And he did, for he scraped out one of the most dolorous heart-renders ever suffered by mortals. We were all gasping to see Jimmy McKenna himself, and now that he mounted the boards we were delighted to see him swallow a barber's pole, a long sword with its scabbard, and two rumping rods [cloth-measuring sticks], after which he ate great lumps of fire and tow [coarse rope], and spewed a lot of beautiful ribbons. His next tricks were done with a cabinet, which, it was announced, belonged to the Queen of Persia. He further explained that when the show season had waxed and waned, he flew to the hand-loom for refuge, and drew part of his daily bread through the eye of the shuttle, and on these occasions he honoured this precious heirloom and eastern relic by using it for a bobbin-box. Had you but seen the treasures that Jimmy drew from this enchanted cabinet – pigeons, rabbits, guinea-pigs, canaries, jewellery, men's and women's apparel, a pair of bellows, an old hat and wig, Rough Robin's big sledgehammer; and he wound up by producing a silver tea-set. Before he was done he made us sit up with astonishment, I can tell you. The next to mount the rostrum was the great Professor Scott … with his cups and balls, clever conjuring tricks, and tossing his knives and daggers in sparkling circle through the air. The final pathetic piece fell to the lot of a poor tar's widow, who seemed steeped in sorrow as she warbled forth in plaintive numbers –
>
> How cruel was that cannon ball
> To knock our Tommy's eye out.
>
> Poor lass! She broke down at this point and had a jolly good cry. Poor little, large hearted Joe, my bosom chum, looked up at me, the tear in his eye, and said, 'Sammy, if we hadn't bought that taffy at Nelly Wales's we could have given her the ha'penny to stop crying, couldn't we?' I shook my head and said there was no hope for it now; besides we couldn't want [do without] the taffy.

McKenny also performed at the White House in Carlisle, on the corner of Irishgate Brow, which had been a meeting place for radicals from 'Peterloo' in 1819 to the 'Chartist days' of the 1840s. He 'used to enliven the streets on Holy Thursday', playing his big drum early in the morning to remind the freemen that there would be 'jolly and lively times'. He was 'a fine, smart, active looking fellow when in full marching order, duly accoutred, and in full regalia, marching through the streets, spanking his drum'. 'His pithy thuds, straight from the shoulder, made the drum wince and give vent to its pent-up feelings; while his masterly style of twirling the drum-sticks and tossing them in the air was a sight to be remembered'. He was one of the 'motley crew of performers', but was widely respected,[48] and 'when he was out with the drum and the pan-pipe, a crowd always followed him through the streets admiring his skill'. At Kingmoor races and carnival, his drumming was 'a piece of fine art'.[49]

When McKenny died in 1848 his friends asked Edward Corvin to write a song. He set *Jimmy McKenny* to the old tune of *The Tinker's Wedding* and used a mixture of 'standard' English and phoneticised vernacular.

Ye honest souls, whose mirth and glee
Re-echoes o'er the verdant lea,
Now doff your cheering smiles awee,
And mourn amang the many, O!
Old Carel's merry jests now cease
And thoughts of *Auld Lang Syne* increase,
Awhile to bear aloft in peace
Our old friend Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare,
Or praise his graceful style and air,
For drumming e'en a saint might swear
None equall'd Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

At every race and fair was he,
Amusing all right merrily,
Change! Presto! Quick! Hie! come and see!
Old Jimmy for a penny, O!
His tricks he'd say delusive were,
Altho' they made the Joskins [yokels] stare,
And swear the Devil had a share
Pro Bono Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare, &c.

He'd bake plum pudding in his hat,
And say 'twould make the ladies fat;
His mystic cant delivering pat,
Affording fun to any, O!
He'd shuffle up his cards and tip
With magic art and cunning grip,
'Is that your card, sir?' Twig the slip -
The De'ils in Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare, &c.

'No *Black Art* to me applies,
You see my hands deceive your eyes -
Thus speaking, Jimmy would surprise
The old, the young, of any, O!
The shy and artless country lass
His *little show* would never pass,
Until she'd left a wee bit brass,
And laughed at Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare, &c.

Ye *Langtoon* weavers noo may sigh,
For Jimmy bid the last good bye -
He'll likely meet *Old Scott* on High
They'll 'gree as well as ony, O!
No more his mystic art we'll glean,
Or march with him to Gretna Green;
Oh, mourn ye weavers, morn and e'en,
For canny Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

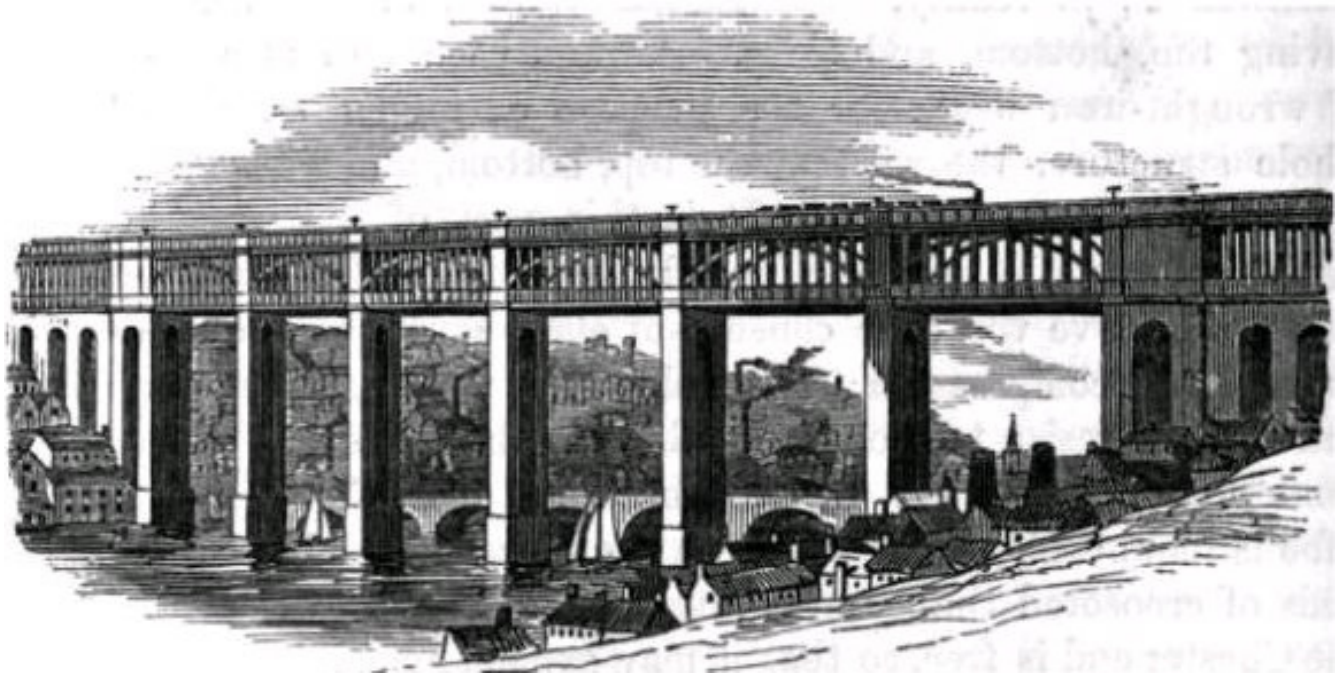
Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare, &c.

But grim death with his magic touch,
At last for Jimmy proved too much,
He never stopp'd the breath of such,
And faith he's throppled [throttled] many, O!
Then farewell, Jim, and may you rest,
Aloft in peace, a welcome guest,
Goodbye old friend, for oh – the best
Of souls was Jimmy 'Kenny, O!

Chorus - No more at Jimmy's tricks we'll stare, &c

McKenny's friends reportedly had these lyrics printed as a slip song,[50] but no copy has been traced.[51]

Railways were linking the region to London, and early morning papers arrived in Gateshead in six hours and 20 minutes and reached Newcastle by noon. In August a passenger train crossed the temporary timber viaduct from Gateshead to Manors station in Newcastle and around 1,300 workers celebrated in several inns. In September the London-based star Jenny Lind sang at Newcastle Theatre Royal, where the cheapest gallery seats cost 10s 6d and receipts were over £1,100. In October passenger trains crossed the temporary timber viaduct from Tweedmouth to Berwick, but in November cholera killed five people in Monkwearmouth, then spread to neighbouring collieries, and the first death occurred in Newcastle in December.[52] Early in 1849 a doctor described the town's churchyards as a 'monster nuisance' and the Vicar of St. Nicholas Church announced that they would be 'shut up as soon as possible'.[53] Reportedly the 'bulk of property belonging to the Corporation' in Sandgate was 'totally unfit for human habitation',[54] but in June the High Level Bridge was opened without ceremony at a cost of over £490,000. In July cholera broke out in North Shields.[55] By autumn 2,022 people had died of cholera and diarrhoea in County Durham and 1,679 in Northumberland,[56] including 295 in Newcastle and 186 in Gateshead,[57] and late in September Queen Victoria's train stopped for only five or ten minutes so she could formally open the High Level Bridge.



58

The lower level allowed people who paid a toll to avoid riverside slums and the opening was celebrated in song.

Nine years earlier the Newcastle schoolteacher Joseph Philip Robson had been found guilty of forging an order for 'gold watches, rings, &c.' that were worth a 'considerable amount' from Mr. Bergna of St. Nicholas' Church Yard to Jacob French of London.[59] Robson received a two-year prison sentence and in 1841 the '30'-year-old 'Plane Maker' was in Manors Goal, while his '30'-year-old wife Isabella, a 'Plain Sewer', lived in St. Nicholas Church Yard with Ellen Stobbs, her '50'-year-old unmarried sister of 'Independent' means, born in Northumberland, nine-year-old Ellen, eight-year-old Joseph junior, three-year-old John Bergna and one-year-old Robert William. After Robson was released he became the 'rhyming puffer extraordinary' of B. Joseph & Co, the Grey Street tailor.[60] Barnet and Fanny Joseph and their eight children lived in a large house at St. Anne's with two teenage female 'General Servants', one born in Hexham and the other in Ireland, plus a '30'-year-old from Penzance, and Joseph employed his 14-year-old nephew in his 'Woollen Drapery'. In summer 1849, when the shipwright John Smith's trousers caught on a nail and saved him from falling from the High Level Bridge, Joseph claimed that the life-saving trousers were from his shop, even though Smith had bought them elsewhere,[61] and Robson wrote a song called *The Queen's Visit to Newcastle*.[62]

Corvin set *The Queen's Second Visit* to the tune *Bow*, *Wow*, *Wow*, which was over a century old, and his lyrics noted that working people had to 'keep' the royal family and satirised 'cheps half drunk, at their own expense' who 'join'd in the loyal roar'. A 'keelman' 'swore that their Bet was better like, than ony Queen Victoria' and criticised the monarch for not providing free alcohol, opening the pawnshops, freeing 'poor souls' from the police station or giving £100 to the poor.

Prince Albert and the Queen thou knaws, are
head of aw wor nation,
They byeth com down the 'other week, and
open'd wor new station;
Byeth rich and poor from aw pairts flock'd, for
every yen was keen sir,
To hev a luik at them they keep, Prince Albert,
and the Queen, sir.

Sic noise and clamor in wor toon, aw never heard
before sir,
And cheps half drunk, at their awn expense, join'd
in the loyal roar sir;
Subscription fireworks on that neet, went up fleein
the air sir,
But Newcassel folks is aw sae rich, for brass
they dinna care sir.

Twee bonny rooms they had fit oot, for the Queen
and Corporation,
To hev a jolly feed nae doot, when she landed in
wor station;
Sic preparations blow me tight, capp'd a'l I ever
see'd sir,
For they had twee pictures dune by Scott, like
Prince Albert and the Queen sir.

The folks they waited aw the morn, aw full of
expectation,
At last the Queen in bonny train, cam ridin' in
wor station;
A keelman chep amang the crowd, observ'd her in
her glory,
He swore their Bet was better like, than ony
Queen Victoria.

Now had she open'd the pawnshops out, she'd get-
ten a deal mair praise sir,
And lettin' poor folks had their awn, their bits of
sunday's claes sir;
Or had she myed the pants run beer, or whisky,
gin, or wine sir,
She wad gettin' mony a hearty cheer, when she
left the banks of Tyne, sir.

Or had she open'd the station house, and lettin'
poor souls out sir,
They'd hail'd her like an angel, sent wiv mony
a loyal shout sir,
Or had she open'd out her purse, she might dune
warse awm sure sir,
And left a hundred pounds or twee, to help to feed
the poor sir.

*Bill Brown and me smash what a spree, on
Atkin's house we stuck sir,
We nearly broke wor necks begox, trying to get a
luick sir;
Prince Albert twigg'd us on the tiles, begox how
he did stare sir,
He wish'd us byeth good afternoon, what could a
Prince de mair sir.

May we always hae what dis wor turn, as through
this life we pass sir,
And then we'll live like Kings and Queens, if we
but hae the brass sir;
May blessings tend wor canny toon, the Queen
and Corporation,
Then give three cheers for Billy's Show, and wor
New Railway Station. 63

William ('Bill') Brown was a member of Purvis's company.[64]

Billy Purvis turned Ranter Preacher was based on 'rumours then flying' that the Anglican showman had become a Primitive Methodist. The tune had appeared as *Corn Clips* in 1842 and was also associated with Alexander Rodgers' *Robin Tamson's Smiddy*.[65]

'Bout Billy Purvis that famed clown,
Ye've all heard tell nae doot man,
And in his life ye aw may read,
When first he went to spout man;
And since that time for mony a year,
Wor canny toon he's cheered man,
He nowther cares for dukes nor lords,
Nor fortune never fears man.

What strange things folks takes in their heads,
For some had Billy deed man,
Some said he'd turned an auctioneer,
But sic stuff aw never heed man;
Some said he'd gyen to howk for goold,
For fortune's smile to reach her,
And others said he'd gyen to Shiels,
And turn'd a ranter preacher.

Some said he'd tyen a public house,
And for hissel' turn'd brewer,
Gox, wor Geordie heard he'd bought a pit,
Smash, he'd make a stunning viewer;
Some said the Queen for conjurin' tricks,
Had sent for him to teach her,
Now this might de, but aw dinna think,
He'd turn a ranter preacher.

Some said he had a fortune left,
And suen was gan to build man,
A place for actor cheps hard up,
Aside wor and Shieldfield man;
But when the Queen comes doon agyen,
Most loudly a'll beseech her,
To myek it knawn, he's nowther deed,
Nor turn'd a ranter preacher.

Now Billy hes deceived a vast,
For gox he's still alive sir,
He'll live as lang as ever he can,
Ye may lay yor life he'll strive sir;
Newcassel folks he's 'mused them lang,
Aw'm sure they wish him weel man,
Smash, aw hope he'll live a thousand years,
And still his bundle steal man.

Napoleon and Wellington,
For killing folks did shine sir,
But Billy he outshines them byeth,
Amang the sons of Tyne sir;
For his men can kill, and fight, and slay,
And not a drop blood spill sir,
And when the're deed, can rise agyen,
And gan and hev a gill man.

Now every body hes a fault,
And Billy hes his te man,
But when he's gyen, his like my lads,
Aw doot we'll never see man;
He's stood dame fortune's crooky ways,
And mony a wintry blast man,
And still he sits and smokes his pipe,
And thinks about the past man.

Grim deeth some day, now suen or late,
Is sure to myek us halt man,
Then let us live and chase all fear,
And niver once find fault man;
And Billy Purvis struggles on,
His best to be yor teacher,
So gan ye sons of coaly Tyne,
To see the ranter preacher.

Neither song was published at the time, but another Corvin song attracted the attention of a Newcastle printer.

John Ross had recently published the typographer Robert Emery's sentimental *The Wife's Dream* as a slip song,[66] and it was also available from William Stewart at 139 Botchergate in Carlisle.[67] J.P. Robson's *Maw Wonderful Wife*, which described a husband's mixed feelings, appeared in his *Original Tyneside Songs*,[68] and Ross also published it as a slip song,[69] and again in *The Songs of the Tyne No.10*, along with *Mally's Dream, A Parody on the* '*Wife's Dream*', which was probably also a parody of Robson's song.

Oh ! tell me, Mally, how it is that ye can sport aboot,
When aw'm workin' doon the shaft an' hardly hez a cloot
To cover ower may nakedness, and keep away the cawd,
An' such a life ye cannit lead, aw's sure its ower bad.

And weel ye knaw for mony months aw hadn't a stroke o' wark,
We hadn't a bit to put i' wor heeds, when criky what a lark !
Ye slipp'd off to the pawnshop, aye an' pawned me Sunday claes,
But that'll niver de maw lass, ye'll ha'e to mend yor ways.

When frae the pawnshop ye came back, as drunk as ony sow,
Ye mind what nasty words ye said, and then at me ye flew
The bonny locks that aw then had, ye tore them oot me heed,
An' as if that wasn't bad eneuf, ye wish'd that aw was deed,

But when a gat ye to yor bed, ye then began to dream,
Ye thowt that aw was deed, and gav out sic a scream,
Crying, 'Tommy, maw poor Tommy, aw'll never see him mair',
An' to finish off this awful scene, ye then began to blair.

In a moment aw jump'd ower the bed an' suen aw struck leet,
Aw couldn't tell what ail'd wor Mall, aw thowt she'd tyen a fit;
She toss'd aboot, an' blair'd and yell'd, and cried oot for her Tommy,
A did maw best to stop her gob, for aw was never a dummy !

Noo since that time she's ne'er been drunk, we leeve as thick as thieves,
Aw never noo hev ony cause to myek use o' my neeves;
An' if ony body asks me noo aboot me bonny wife,
Wey aw tell them she's as dear to me, as maw awn bit canny life !

E. CORVEN. [70]

Corven can sound quite like Corvin, when spoken, but whether Ross mistook the spelling, or Corvin supplied the new one, is uncertain. What is clear is that 'Corven' assumed that the men in his audiences would agree that a wife who pawned her husband's best clothes for drink, got drunk and tore his hair out, could expect a punch. Later that year this song appeared in Ross's *Tyneside Songs No.1*,[71] and Robson included it in *Songs of the Bards of the Tyne*, but without acknowledging the author.[72]

There had been singers at Roger Whitfield's 'Concerts' at The Shades in Manor Street, and it had previously enjoyed 'increasing Patronage', but he discontinued them in February 1850 and advertised in the *Newcastle Courant* that the 'spacious and well-lighted Room', measuring 34 feet by 20 feet, and an apartment, were to let.[73] The competition was too strong, and a Sunday paper was linking concert halls across the country.

Liberal London licensed victuallers had financed *The Era* since 1838, but it later focussed on sport, freemasonry and theatre.

[74]

In February 1850 *The Era* noted that John Balmbra's Music Saloon at the Wheat Sheaf Inn at 3 & 4 Cloth Market, Newcastle, was 'well-conducted' and 'continues to receive that patronage which it deseves' for a company that included 'Yankee' Mellor.[75]

Whitfield advertised the 'convenient Approaches' to his room from the Royal Arcade and Manor Street, where access was 'wide and commodious, and well adapted for the reception of Goods of a bulky description'.[76] In May *The Era* reported that 'Mr Balmbra's Music Saloon' had 'crowded and respectable audiences'.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.—*Mr. Balmbra's Music Saloon.*—This popular establishment continues to increase in attraction, the succession of novelties which the enterprising and indefatigable manager brings forward for the entertainment of his patrons drawing every night crowded and respectable audiences. The utmost harmony and good feeling pervades the company, each member seeming to vie with each other, not only in promoting his or her professional reputation and respectability, but the interest of an establishment which has for years sustained a celebrity surpassed by few, if any, in the provinces. [77]

In summer the *Newcastle Journal* noted that Balmbra's tent on the Town Moor for the races had a 'beautiful portico, surmounted by a "golden sheaf"'.

> There was, usual, a great number of tents erected in the accustomed locality, stretching eastward along the Moor from nearly opposite the winning-chair; and many of them were remarkable for the taste displayed in their decorations, especially at the principal entrance. Mr. Balmbra, of the Wheat Sheaf, deserves great credit for having led the way in the march of improvement in this respect, but judging from the rivalry exhibited on all sides of him, greater results may be expected than have hitherto been achieved.[78]

Unlike Purvis's travelling show, Balmbra's permanent and 'respectable' indoor venue was open all the year round, and several inns and beer shops provided musical entertainment for working-class audiences.

2. The publican fiddlers

In 1810 Simon Temple leased some land from the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral south of St. Hilda's Churchyard in South Shields and employed *sinkers* to dig a shaft. The huge expense subsequently forced Temple to sell Chapter Main Colliery to the London-based proprietors of Jarrow Colliery, who later sold it to John and Robert William Brandling in 1825, but the shaft eventually reached the Bensham Seam, 850 feet down, where the coal was six feet deep. The *downcast* section of the single shaft was used to lower men, boys and empty tubs, and a wooden *brattice* (partition) separated it from the *upcast*, which brought up the workers and full tubs, under the supervision of a *banksman*.[1]

Richard Thornton was born in Jarrow around 1802 and probably worked in a pit as a boy. He later married Frances, who had been born in South Shields,[2] and was four years younger. By 1839 Richard was a *banksman* at what was now known as St. Hilda's Colliery, and Richard junior was born in Templetown on 4 February,[3] in a house at the top of the stairs going down from Colliery Square.[4] That year Thomas Hair sketched what he knew as 'St. Hilda's Wallsend'.

5

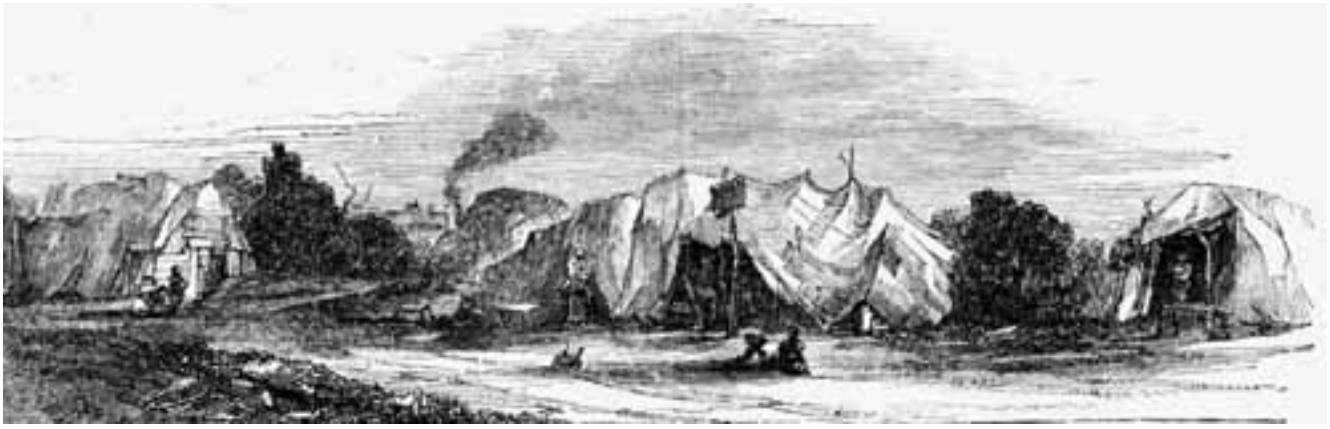
The *viewer* (colliery supervisor) and *overmen* (his underlings) considered it safe for pitmen to use candles and gunpowder underground,[6] but at 8.45am on 28 June John Thornton saw 'smoke issuing from the down cast shaft, mingled with small coal'.

> William Johnson, a banksman, shouted down the shaft, but received no answer, and the machine was stopped. About ten minutes afterwards, some of the workpeople, who had forced their way to the bottom of the shaft, called up to the banksman, and the machine was immediately 'set away', and they were brought to the surface. The only information they could give, was, that the pit had fired 'far in bye'. … The floor of the pit, with the bodies of men and boys and horses strewn dead in every direction, presented … a most awful sight.[7]

Around 100 escaped,[8] but most of the 51 men and boys whose bodies were recovered had died from inhaling carbon monoxide.[9] The 57-year-old widower, Thomas Horne, was the oldest, but the average age was 26, five were 10 or 11 and James Longstaff was nine.[10] The inquest jury's verdict was 'Accidental death' but they recommended using safety lamps in future.[11] A subscription for the 19 widows and 44 orphans raised £1,000,[12] and a 52nd corpse was discovered later.[13]

In 1841 it took weeks before John Leifchild, the government's subcommissioner on child labour, could understand the speech of boys in north Durham collieries, but their vocabulary was 'too restricted to admit of common or feeble words' and he noted that they were 'unable to transfuse the bitterness of their thoughts into their homely terms'. Up to 15 percent were 12 or younger and some were six. They worked a *trappers*, operating underground doors to improve ventilation, and their 5s a week wages were important to their families.[14]

That spring Richard Thornton senior was described as a 'Pit Man', and he and Frances were aged '30', though she was around 25. They lived in Templetown and had a six-month-old daughter and three sons. Richard junior, known as 'Dick', recalled running after his mother with a *cracket* (small stool) to get 'the needful', a bitter purgative, and the neighbours 'chaffed' him. During the 1844 strike Dick was aware that pitmen were 'turned out of their homes and lived under canvas, many families sharing one large tent'.[15]


16

Bread came from supporters in 'all or most of the surrounding collieries in waggons', and the pitmen of Thornley Colliery 'stood well in the estimation of the strikers for their liberality'. A song was 'written about them and sung by the boys and girls at nights'. Years later Dick reflected that 'work was resumed after the usual hardships accompanying such foolish methods of settling disputes',[17] but in May 1845 coal owners ended the 'Regulation' (cartel) and competed, and many were JPs.[18]

Probably around 1847 Dick was sent to school, but 'I don't think I ever went without my mother and a something she called a strap up her sleeve'. The school was 'cold and cheerless' and the master's 'only qualification' was 'one leg and a crutch'. Dick left 'after taking several degrees of straps, canes, etc.', and was 'breeched' (given long trousers) and sent to the pit with his father's dinner a mile away. Dick mixed with pit lads at street corners and argued about the 1831 strike,[19] when the magistrate and coal owner Nicholas Fairles had used marines to stop striking pitmen picketing blacklegs in South Shields.[20] A striker called Ralph Armstrong fatally wounded Fairles near Jarrow Slake, and Fairles identified him as his assailant,[21] but he insisted that William Jobling had only held his horse's head and then ran away after Armstrong pulled Fairles off his horse and hit him. Armstrong escaped, but Jobling did not. The jury at his trial found him guilty in 15 minutes and the judge attacked trade unions, sentenced him to death and ordered that his corpse be hung in chains.[22] After a public execution in front of Durham court, his body and face were covered in pitch and a military escort accompanied his corpse to Jarrow Slake, where it was encased in an iron cage hanging from a 21 foot post fixed into a huge stone near the murder scene.[23] (Days later the last gibbeting in Britain took place in Leicester.[24]) Dick understood that Jobling's corpse was 'removed by some of his friends and buried somewhere'.

By 1849 the nine-year-old 'began to have a desire for pit-work' and his father got him a job carrying picks.

> Each hewer owned so many which bore his initials. My work was to gather them and take them to the pick sharpener, and afterwards carry them back and send them down to the men.
>
> There were two of us doing this, and … without any reward, real or promised, we used to try and break each other down. I often wonder how I could have been so silly, even at that age.
>
> I remember going down the pit on a Sunday with my father … in what was called a curve. This was just a basket suspended by a chain and with a spring hook attached to a flat roof …
>
> I often wonder what pit lads today would think of descending clinging to a rope like monkeys.
>
> The method was to stand the boys in a line and the banksman would almost throw them on the rope. Slowly descending, they would then hug the rope with their hands and feet until it reached the bottom, then slide down and then hop off to their work.[25]

Accidents happened.

26

Pitmen and boys might carry safety lamps but *overmen* continued to send men and boys into extremely dangerous places.

Dick Thornton recalled that his parents had more children and had to move house.

> At this period we lived in a colliery house called The Waggon Way, one of those one-storey cottages of olden times that were a pleasure to see, each wife vying with her neighbour in cleanliness and decoration.
>
> How peaceful all seemed, with doors thrown open to show a four-post bed (with pointed bed-poles), with its lovely hangings and quilt and half a dozen hard-bottomed mahogany chairs and the family seated as far apart as possible in each corner of the room, twiddling their thumbs with scarcely a word as it is Sunday.

In our case I am afraid we were not so quiet and sedate as we were more numerous and perhaps a bit more mischievous.[27]

Dick's father sometimes played his fiddle in a pub after work.

I don't mean he was a Paganini, but he could get through a lot of stuff in the first position and it is quite possible if he had attempted any other there might have been a pit-house to let.

However, he could get through hornpipes, strathspeys, jigs and snatches from William Tell in a manner that pleased his pals and he made it a custom to take the fiddle and myself to the Grey Horse pub … every pay Saturday and would play tunes that pleased his pals midst beer, tobacco smoke and sloppy tables which kept the waiters busy and myself amused.

Robert Turnbull had the Grey Horse at 24 Corstorphine Town,[28] and Dick 'gave a tune' there on his father's fiddle, but the first 'show' he saw was at William Copeland's Locomotive Inn at Mill Dam.

They had let off the use of the cellar to an old showman, who at opening time would lift up the hatch …, fasten it back with a small chain, get out his drum, place a combination of thick straw pipes, held together with a leather casing, under his chin and play the overture. This finished he invited the assembled crowd to pay their pennies and jump down into 'The palace of dazzling delight', to see his show.

'Another short tune and we will begin', he said, and we did. A very dim light was shown behind a dirty cotton sheet, and between the light and the sheet you saw something in the form of a broken bridge. He sang:

'The Bridge is broken, I have come to mend it,
Fal the dal the dido,
Fal the dal the dido'.

I don't remember whether he succeeded in mending the bridge, but his next contribution was what he called 'A Worser'. It was the body of a dead cat pulled up and down between the sheet and the light and the showman informed his audience that we 'Might have seen a better show but never a worser'.[29]

Dick subsequently accompanied the 'turns' in the cellar,[30] but many of the best fiddlers were in Gateshead and Newcastle.

James Hill was born in Scotland around 1812, but his family migrated to Tyneside. He learned to play the fiddle at an early age and later composed *Miss Hunter's Hornpipe* for Sarah Hunter of County Durham, who married him in 1833.[31] By 1839 Hill was the landlord of the Ship Launch pub near the Ouseburn, just west of Newcastle, and John Spence had the Lord Nelson on the nearby Ballast Hills.[32] In summer 1840 Spence's 'refreshment booth' on the Town Moor during race week was a 'famous rendezvous' for *porterpokemen* (quayside labourers) and he hired Hill 'to add to the attractions of the carnival'. He composed a hornpipe called *Spence's Tent* and 'played it to the pitmen and other admiring patrons', and wrote *The Marquis of Waterford* to commemorate his visit.[33] By 1841 Spence was landlord of the Cock in the Cut, Sandgate,[34] and the 'Musician' James Hill and his wife Sarah, both described as '25', lived with William Hunter and his wife, both aged '60', at the Hawk Inn at 31 Bottle Bank, Gateshead. The Hunters were probably Sarah's parents,[35] and 'Jimmy' Hill played in the street's many pubs.[36] He and Sarah lodged in Swan Street, near the Hawk Inn, at the corner with High Street, then at 'Rooldun-court', just off Bottle Bank, and at Moulin-yard, High Street, and Hill was a 'Publican and Musician' in Forth Street and Ouseburn. In June 1842 he was sued for a debt of £41 10s, plus £3 5s 4d damages and 15s costs, and spent time in the debtor's jail, but was discharged in November. He sometimes played at village dances, and influenced musicians as far afield as Haltwhistle; but once, when returning from a corn supper, he reportedly sat on his fiddle and smashed it. Tastes changed, and in 1844 there was a 'polka' craze, so Hill composed *The Hawk Polka*.[37] In 1847 William Gattis had the Hawk Inn, Spence was landlord of the Ship in Newcastle Milk Market and a James Hill (possibly the fiddler) had the White Swan in nearby St. Mary's Street,[38] but a new music was becoming fashionable.

Newcastle people, and especially soldiers and sailors, had seen black men, and some had settled, including William Fifefield, 'a man of colour', who had been a drummer in Tyneside regiments, and afterwards drove a 'Comfortable' coach between Newcastle and Shields. Fifefield died in 1834,[39] but some white performers in the USA had begun to 'black up'.

Thomas Dartmouth Rice was born near the East River Docks in New York in 1808. He had some formal education before becoming an apprentice woodcarver, but by 1827 he was an actor in New York and also performed in southern slave states.[40]

41

He learned to mimic black people's speech and returned to the Park Theatre in New York, where he dressed in rags, a battered hat and torn shoes, blackened his face and hands and impersonated a nimble and irreverently witty field slave.[42] His song, *Jump Jim Crow*, with which he accompanied his dancing, was reportedly inspired by a disabled slave, Jim Crow or Jim Cuff, around 1828,[43] and by 1832 it was Rice's signature song and E. Riley published the lyrics and tune in New York.

By 1833 news of his 'blackface' act had reached London,[44] and in 1836 'Daddy' Rice appeared at the Surrey Theatre. Mrs Leman Rede wrote a sketch for him and *Jump Jim Crow* was an instant hit. He went on to play at the Adelphi Theatre and Pavilion Theatre every evening and after 21 weeks he had sung *Jump Jim Crow* 1,260 times and reportedly earned £11,000.[45] In 1842 'Boz' (Charles Dickens) saw a black dancer in New York and called him 'Boz's Juba', though his name was William Henry Lane.[46] Rice visited Britain again that year and two 'blackface' minstrels introduced the modern banjo in 1843, while Dan Emmett and the Virginia Minstrels performed in London and the provinces.[47] 'Boz's Juba' arrived in England in 1848 and he and the 'blackface' Ethiopian Serenaders were a sensation.

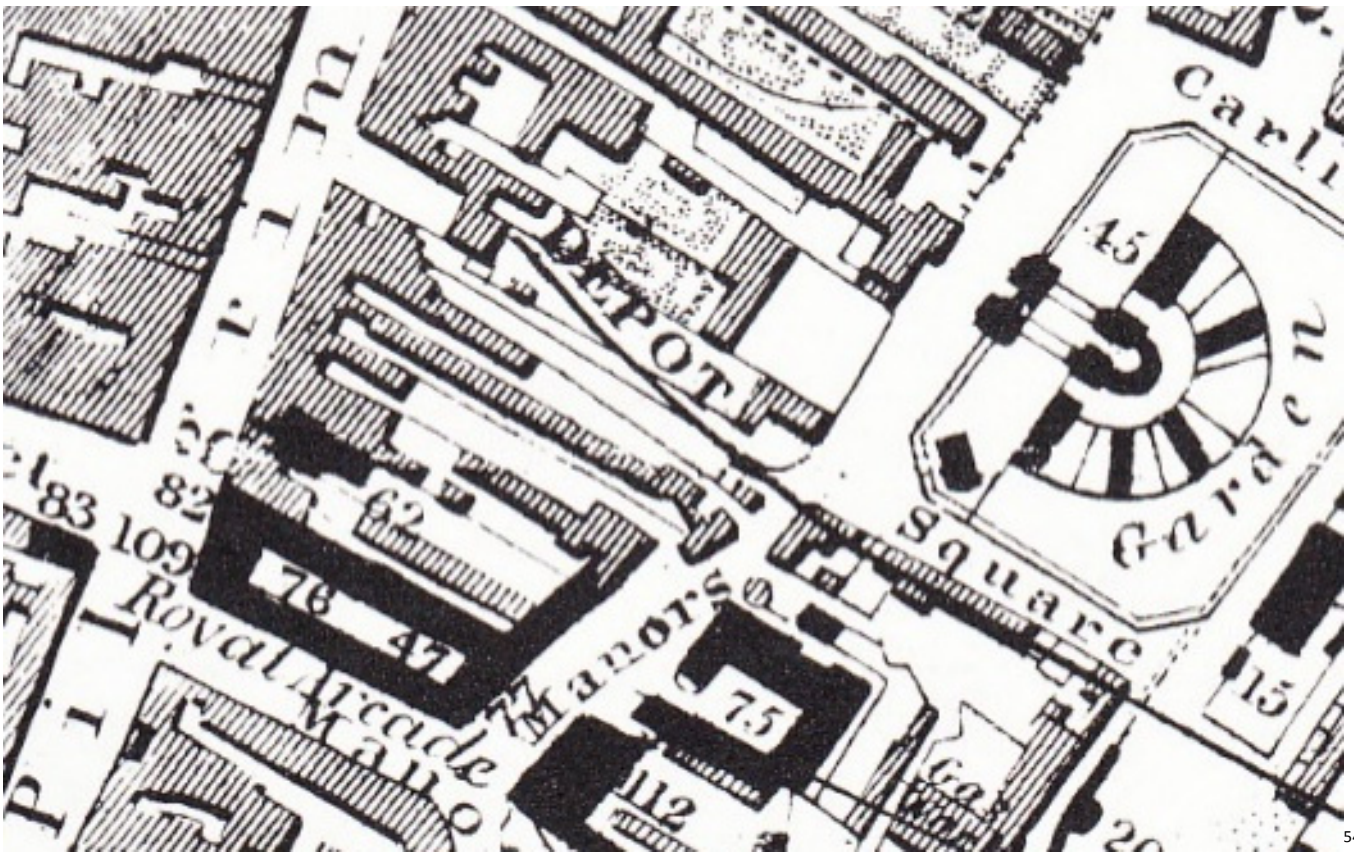
48

In Newcastle William and Thomas Fordyce published *Jim Crow's Song Book* at 48 Dean Street, and it included *Jim Crow's Visit to Newcastle*,[49] but it is not known if either Rice or Lane visited the town.

In January 1849 Spence refused to serve beer to a man with no money, and tried to make him leave, but was smacked in the face, and the assailant was fined 2s 6d plus 2s 6d costs.[50] By then Hill was back playing in Gateshead.[51] The Newcastle & North Shields Railway linked north Tyneside communities and Newcastle and Gateshead were within reach of thousands of workers who could afford the fare.

52

Newcastle's railway 'Depot' was between Pilgrim Street and Manors' Gaol, and not far from The Shades in the Royal Arcade.[53]



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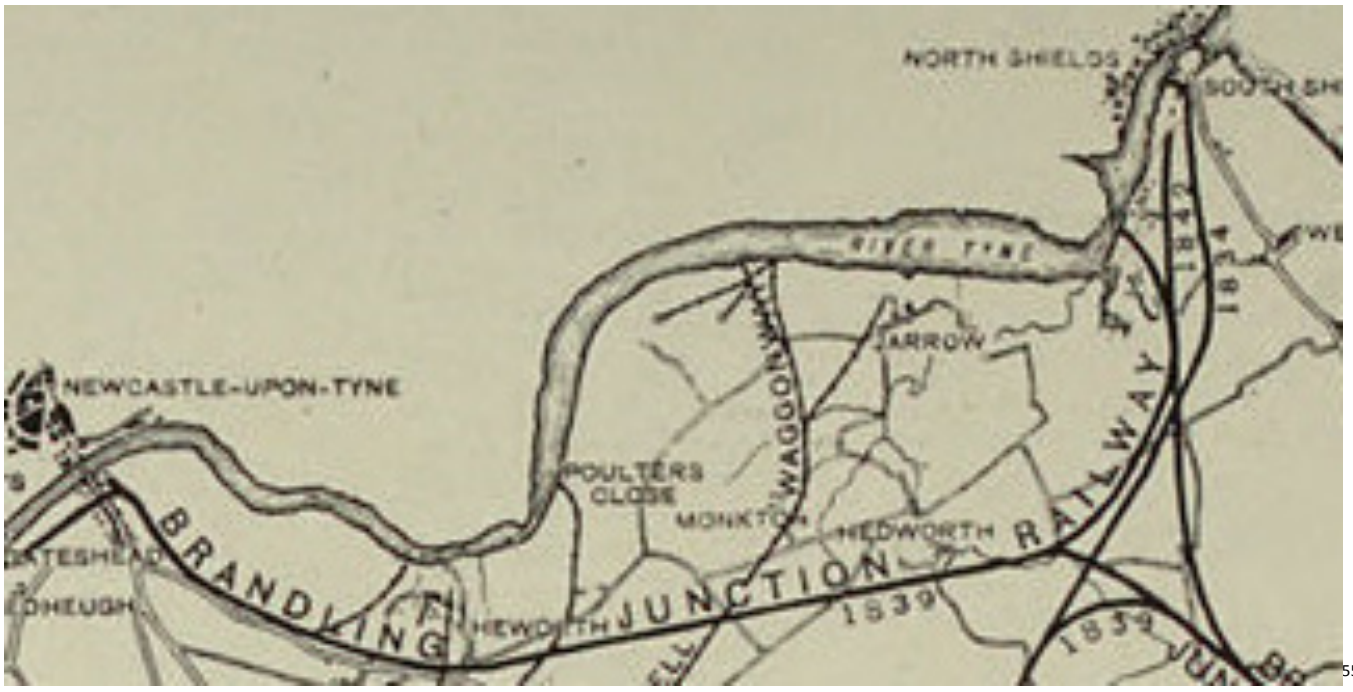
The Brandling Junction Railway linked North Durham to Gateshead.



[55]

Dick Thornton recalled that 'every weekend' it was 'the pitman's delight to go the rounds to hear the publican-fiddlers' in Gateshead and Newcastle, and one Saturday his father took him by train to 'make a round of the public houses to hear the best fiddlers'.[56] The South Shields Railway terminus was not far from St. Hilda's Colliery,[57] and they 'booked at High Shields in what had been a private house at the west end of Reckendyke Lane'. There were no platforms, so they had to climb stone steps to get into 'a carriage without a roof' and sit on 'bare wooden seats'. When the carriages were full, others travelled 'with one leg inside the truck and the other outside', or sat 'astride the buffers' to the wooden station near Oakwellgate in Gateshead,[58] which can be seen on this 1851 map.

[59]

Dick Thornton and his father walked down High Street to Bottle Bank to visit

> fiddlers who could be seen and heard on Saturdays by calling on them in their beer shops and ordering a beer and requesting the proprietor to play any tune you fancied which he would do after you had waited your turn.
>
> Such was the demand that it took a considerable time before you got what you wanted unless you had ordered beer. There were 14 such places at that time in Newcastle, and the miners would visit them all to form an opinion as to who was the best fiddler. They did a roaring trade on Saturdays.
>
> Our first call, I remember, was to hear Jimmy Hill who was located at the Hawk on the Bottle Bank, Gateshead. Jimmy wrote several very fine hornpipes. *The Hawk*, *The High Level*, and many more and he was the daddy of them all at hornpipe playing.

Father and son crossed Tyne Bridge and walked up to the Lord Nelson in Pilgrim Street, where Bobby Stevenson was in his 'usual elevated chair' and 'ready and willing to oblige'. Then they visited Bobby Spoor, who played *The High Level*, which 'was said to be his composition, and the well-known *Cuckoo* solo'. Their next call was to hear Joseph Watson Derbyshire play the fiddle at his parents' pub in Sandgate.[60] In 1850 Spence was still at the Ship in Newcastle, but the Hawk in Gateshead was not in the local directory, and inns were in competition with basic beer-houses.

The 1830 Beer Act had empowered anyone who paid the Poor Rate to buy a £2 2s licence for the consumption of beer on or off the premises, without troubling the magistrates, but while closing hours were more strictly defined than for inns, retail prices fell by around a penny a pint in the provinces.[61] Newcastle Temperance Society was founded that year,[62] and in 1834 another Beer Act raised the fee to £3 3s and required a character reference signed by six householders.[63] In Newcastle James Rewcastle was a keen advocate of 'Sabbath Observance' by 1837. In 1838 he was a Bookseller at 103 Side and advertised for an apprentice and a 'steady active JOURNEYMAN PRINTER, to manage the ordinary Business of the Printing Office'. 'A Tee-totaller will be preferred'. In 1839 Rewcastle lived above his shop at 11 Dean Street.[64] Some teetotallers adopted the 'long pledge', which barred them from offering as well as consuming alcohol. By 1840, nationally, there were almost 40,000 beer houses;[65] and another Beer Act required a certificate from six householders who paid at least £11 in Poor Rate.[66] In 1841 the '55'-year-old bookseller 'James Rucastle', Mary, his '45'-year-old wife, two daughters, aged 16 and eight, lived with a young couple who were servants. In 1845 Rewcastle seconded a proposal to oppose giving government money to the Roman Catholic College in Maynooth.[67] By 1846 his family lived in Stowell Square, but after his teenage son died, Rewcastle gave up bookselling and combined printing with rent-collecting and buying, selling and looking after property, with the help of a 'Footman' enforcer. In 1847 Rewcastle spoke at a meeting of 600 teetotallers.[68] He opposed an increase in military expenditure,[69] and was a Liberal,[70] but by 1850 he was joint secretary of Newcastle Temperance Society.[71] That year the prominent black US abolitionist William Wells Brown spoke in Blaydon, and other black speakers, including Frederick Douglass, would follow.[72]

A Newcastle Town Council inspector reported that the number of literate people in Sandgate had declined and there was no day school. There were 19 common lodging houses and 170 shops sold goods in 'half-pennyworths', while almost every other building was a pub and one in seven women were prostitutes in a 'most systematic manner'. The inspector concluded that Sandgate should be 'evacuated and then bombarded by artillery'.[73] One Saturday evening that summer Dr George Robinson toured working-class districts and published his findings anonymously in the *Newcastle Chronicle*. He began at the Flesh Market, which was 'very crowded, principally by the lower classes, many of whom are prevented from an earlier attendance by the late hours of business', and 'numbers of the more idle – both male a female'. He went downhill, witnessed 'an altercation' between a 'respectable-looking' lodging-house keeper and 'an unfortunate girl' of about 16, who was in arrears with her rent and then entered a pub where 'a company of upwards of sixty' were 'passing the evening in drinking and dancing'.

> The room was crowded, and its atmosphere so vitiated, as to be almost unbearable. The company was of both sexes, chiefly youths and girls under twenty. I saw several companies of the same description during the evening, but none so large as this. Their numbers varied from ten to thirty. I next visited a music saloon. The room was fitted up like a small theatre. At one end a stage was erected, decorated with scenery and hung with curtains. One of the company went on to the stage and commenced singing a comic song. The company sat on forms listening to this Jim-crow-like performance, and sipping their glasses; about twenty of them might be assembled here, all males. Beside the stage was a bar where the liquor was to be served, and behind it a girl, who seemed to be mistress of the ceremonies. The other officials were a door-keeper and a man dressed out like a nigger, with blackened face and white calico robes, who acted as waiter and collector of the revenue. I was invited to make myself at home but, respectfully declined. At another house, I found one of the clubs holding their meeting. It was composed of Irishmen … [who] had complete possession of the house – not of the club-room merely – but the members swarmed on the stairs, and in every apartment; and it seemed abundantly evident that what liquor would be consumed there that night would be consumed by them. Some houses are frequented by Irishmen; some by keelmen; mechanics patronize others; the pitmen, too, make their selection, and 'respectable parties' theirs. But some who would no doubt claim to be respectable people – some men well dressed – I found in some of the lowest houses. I have no doubt that many of them were married men, and I should suspect – merely from their appearance – that some of them were occasional church-goers. At almost all the public houses I visited, the parties were promiscuous. I was pained to see so many boys and girls, and even children of tender years among them. The number of houses is immense, especially in Sandgate. Almost every alternate house along the street is a public-house. They are of all grades. Some are very select, and admit no females. The greater number admit all who will come. A smaller number go by the name of 'Swankey shops', and are of a very low order, frequented by girls of the lowest grade, and by thieves. With a view to accommodate as large a company as possible, they are fitted up with boxes, bearing the resemblance of *pews* … [which] run down one side of the room, occupying about one-half of the space, while the other half is reserved for dancing. How many fiddlers there are in Sandgate, or what sort of trade it is, I do not yet know; but there are a great many of them, generally three to each company. They are not hired by the publicans, but are allowed free access, and draw their support from voluntary contributions. Here then are the inmates, amid music and mirth, smoking and drinking, gambling and swearing. The greater part of their vocabulary was beyond my comprehension. Such a thing as shame they are perfect strangers to.

Robinson acknowledged that some workers, and especially skilled artisans, were intelligent.

> Each one had his own sentiments, and freely gave utterance to them. If one argued for communism, another was ready with his objections to it. If one maintained that a glass of beer was a very good thing for a hard toiled man, his neighbour seriously urged upon his fellow-workmen the necessity of abstinence and self-government, ere they were fitted to work out their own redemption, or entitled to their proper share in the government of the nation.

There were around 200 'sick and funeral' societies, with up to 200 members apiece, and 100 or so similar societies in Gateshead. Many workers belonged to the Newcastle and Gateshead Central Union for the Prevention of Frauds on Benefit Societies, but Robinson deprecated their use of pubs for meetings. He noted that the Irish 'invasion' in Mount Pleasant and Craig Alley Stairs was 'so complete' that 'among the numerous families in this quarter scarcely an English one is to be found'. There was 'unmitigated wretchedness', including two families in one room with two beds but no blankets. A widow, her five children and the widow's sister lived in another. 'Two bedsteads and a shake-down; every pane broken; a board and a piece of canvas put up to keep out the cold, which, of course, shuts out the light too. The fire-place is in ruins; no furniture; house always fills with smoke; one of the walls quite open; the floor also broken'. The widow had 'lost a child through the cold'. Fifteen other widows on the Stairs were in a similar state. One had lost her husband, two sons, a daughter and her husband and five grandchildren in two years. Some buildings were next to former stables and maggots and rats came up through the floors. Water had to be carried from the Manor Chare *pant* up long flights of steps, while children sold 'sticks' (kindling) to help support their families. English landlords demanded exorbitant rents and refused to make repairs, so Robinson concluded that 'the condition of our poor population is, in many respects, worse than that of the savage'.[74]

Probably around this time Dick Thornton's father 'got some money from a building society', built some property and

> decided to leave the colliery and go into business in the beer line, having secured a beer licence to drink on [the premises]. This seemed a good idea with him being able to play the fiddle and I becoming a novelty at it.
>
> Things looked rosy, but having too much time to waste my father began to make too many friends in the town, and neglected home, often returning the worse for drink to the annoyance of my mother.[75]

The differences between would-be 'respectable' musical entertainment in inns, and that in beer shops like Thornton's, were growing, and stars from London, Scotland and elsewhere, including some from overseas, could reach Newcastle by train.

[76]

These performers could then travel across Tyneside by railway.

In autumn 1851 *The Era* noticed that Roger Whitfield had reopened the Shades Concert Room in Newcastle. Mr J.W. Booth, the 'inimitable step dancer and delineator of negro character', was 'equal to "Boz's Juba"', and was 'received nightly with bursts of applause'.

> The characteristic Irishman, Mr. J. Costello, meets with his full share of admiration. Mrs Blamphin, as Bravura and Scotch ballad singer maintains the reputation she has for some years held as one of the prettiest singers in the North. Mr Blamphin on the violin (conductor of the musical department), assisted by his two sons on the harp, gives every satisfaction.

Costello also impersonated a 'Yorkshireman' and attracted 'a large share of public patronage' at The Shades. John Sessford and others played to 'crowded houses' at the Wheat Sheaf, and *The Era* hoped that the public would 'uphold' this 'rational place of recreation'. *The Era* also noticed that the Scarborough Spa Saloon in South Shields was a 'popular Temple of Music' and 'Mr. W. Thomson' – Billy Thompson, a veteran of Purvis's travelling theatre - 'cannot fail to ensure success'. William Campbell, another veteran of Purvis's company, ran the Northumberland Hotel Music Saloon in North Shields, which had 'been open a considerable time', and 'appears to be progressing very well' with a company that included Mr. J Glen and Miss Kate Marten. In November Booth managed The Shades in Newcastle, Balmbra's was doing good business and another venue had opened, while Campbell had engaged a 'Nigger Melodist' in North Shields.

Shades Music Saloon.—(Proprietor, Mr. R. Whitfield.) This old established place still keeps very good footing under the able management of Mr. Booth and a very talented company.

Balmbra Music Saloon.—We popped in here the other evening, and found that business still continued good; the bill of fare is very attractive.

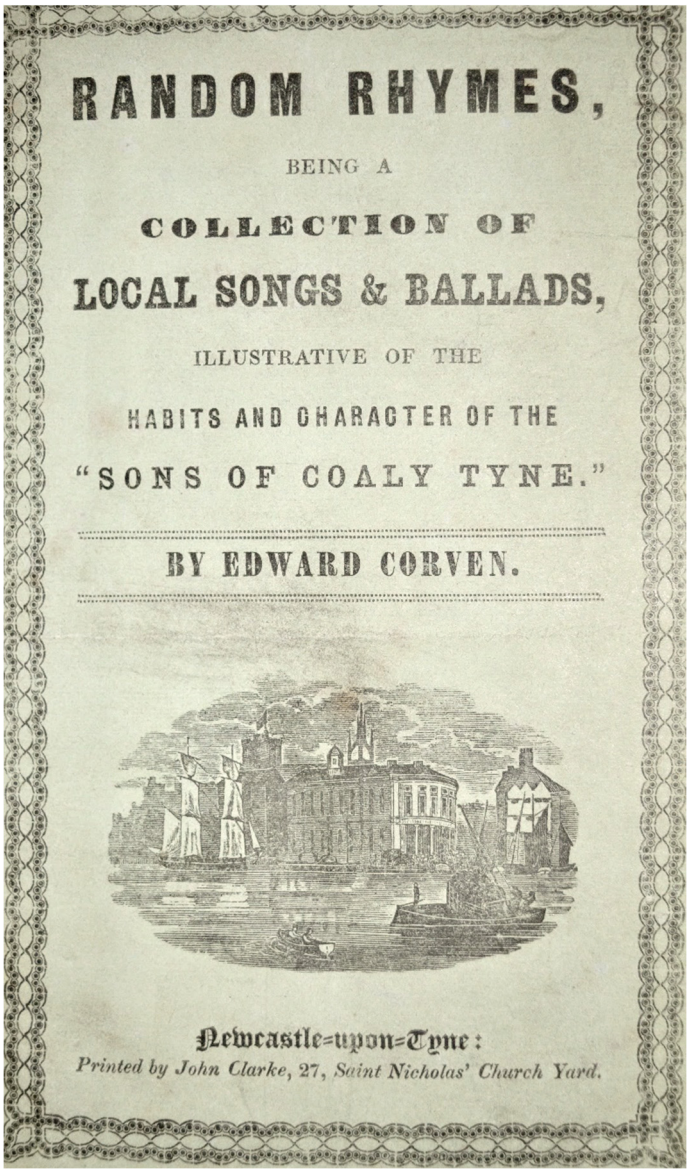
Royal Casino.—This new place of amusement continues to receive a very fair share of encouragement; and the proprietor, Mr. W. Hall, seems determined to cater for the amusement of the people of our canny town.

NORTH SHIELDS.—*Campbell's Saloon.*—Mr. Thomas Glen, Nigger Melodist, and Mr. J. Jones, Comic Singer, are just concluding a very successful engagement. Their places are to be supplied (according to announcement) with a Mr. Thomas Kirkham, and a Miss Cecilia Young, *danseuse* from the Casino, Leeds.

In December Balmbra engaged artistes from London and had a 'very steady run'. Whitfield had sacked Booth and apppointed 'Mr J. Costello, the characteristic singer and dancer', as manager of The Shades, and he engaged 'Mr. Edward Corven, a local singer and composer'.[77]

3. Edward Corven

John Clarke had printed J.P Robson's *The Life and Adventures of the far-Famed Billy Purvis* in 1849, and late in 1850 he produced a 36-page songbook for Edward Corven.


RANDOM RHYMES,

BEING A

COLLECTION OF

LOCAL SONGS & BALLADS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

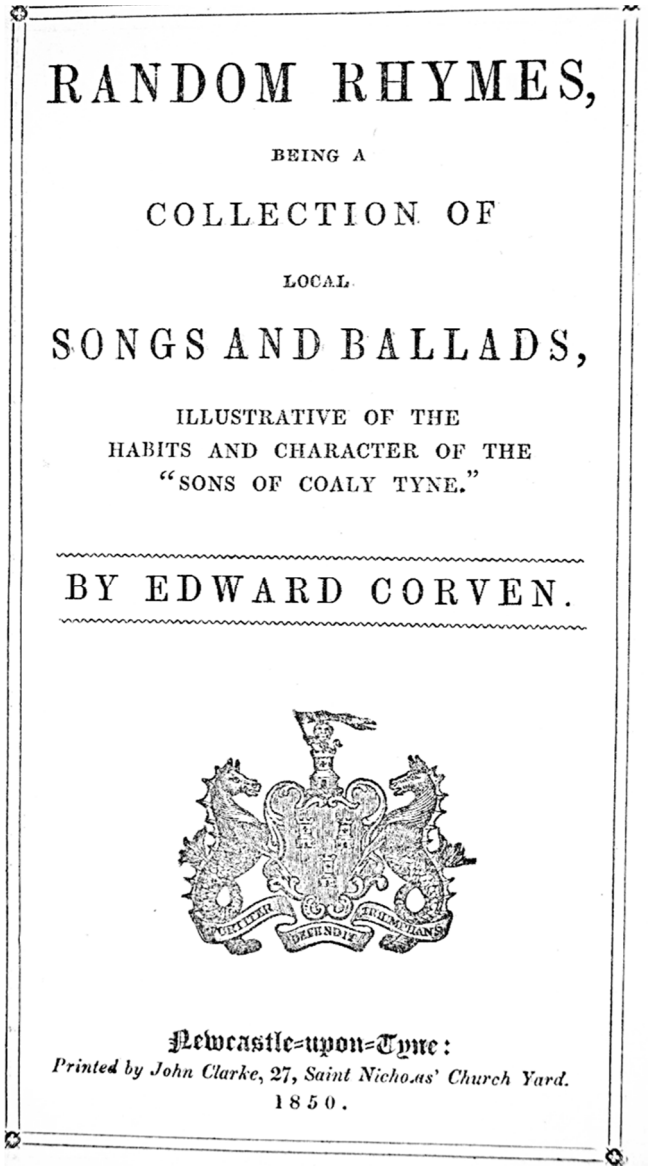
HABITS AND CHARACTER OF THE

"SONS OF COALY TYNE."

BY EDWARD CORVEN.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

Printed by John Clarke, 27, Saint Nicholas' Church Yard.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1850.

The neat layout, varied typefaces, decorative borders, illustrations and careful printing were clearly intended to make a serious impression, and while the title appears to be self-deprecating, the use of Edward, not 'Ned', indicates a desire for respect. The claim to illustrate 'the habits and character' of half the working-class population of Tyneside underlined Corven's confidence in his insider status, and it also showed a respect for workers which had often been entirely absent in the supposedly 'humorous' songs by earlier local writers, most of whom had been petit-bourgeois by origin or destination and who routinely caricatured workers. The keel, wherry and sea-going vessels illustrate many men's work in and around Newcastle, but while the Guildhall was the headquarters of the town's most powerful men, its inclusion was not necessarily a mark of respect for the Corporation. Neither was the coat of arms on the title-page, since it was a conventional symbol of local patriotism.

The 'Dedication' showed conventional modesty, including Corven's modest claim to be 'unlettered and unlearned', but he clearly wished to dissociate himself from poets with 'Scholastic' pretensions, including the likes of J.P. Robson. The stress on having sung at 'Concerts' and other 'places of Amusement' in Northumberland and Durham suggests that Corven had performed in venues other than music saloons, but he did not mention his training in Billy Purvis's company. He evidently had good reason to believe that the market for his songbook included workers in the wider 'Neighbourhood', while the statement that he had been 'solicited for Copies' of his songs suggests that his performances had gone down well with a wide range of 'Friends and Patrons'. The conventional illustrations on the back page may have been the only music-related ones that Clarke possessed, but the list of 'Contents' may suggest that Corven expected some potential purchasers to pick up the songbook, turn it over and recognise the titles of some his songs, not least since *The Queen's Second Visit* and *Billy Purvis turned Ranter Preacher* were not new.

DEDICATION.

To the Skippers, Colliers, and Working Men in general, of Tyneside and Neighbourhood.

My Friends and Patrons,

Permit me to dedicate to you this little Collection of Songs, most of which have been written and sung by me, at various Concerts and places of Amusement, in Northumberland and Durham.

Having been solicited for Copies of them by many of my Friends, I determined to throw them into the best form I could, and publish them.

Being unlettered, and unlearned, I have not the advantage of compiling possessed by the "Scholastic" Author; and, must therefore crave your indulgence, to excuse many little discrepancies which in consequence will appear.

If I succeed in retaining the kind approval, you have hitherto so generously bestowed on my efforts to amuse, the object of my ambition will be attained.

I beg respectfully to subscribe myself,
With great esteem,
Your obliged and obedient Servant,
EDWARD CORVEN.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Queen's Second Visit	3
Billy Purvis turned Ranter Preacher	5
The Curds and Cream House Ghost	7
He wad be a Noodle	8
Yer Gannin to be a Keelman	10
The happy Keelman	11
The rise in Baccy	13
The Shades Saloon	14
The Goose Club	16
Bella Gray	17
O, maw bonnie Nannie O!	19
Parody on She wore a wreath of Roses	20
Sweating System	21
Tom Johnson	23
Campbell's grand Saloon, North Shields	25
The Folks of Aud Shields	26
The New Mayor of South Shields	28
South Shields Corporation	30
Blyth in a Bleeze	31

1

It was later claimed, though without evidence, that the typographer Robert Emery wrote *The Curds and Cream-house Ghost*,[2] which was about a *P.D.* in charge of the keel rudder whose workmates left him alone in the *huddock* (cabin). Corven sang it to a late 18th century Irish tune, *Gary Owen*, which was associated with Thomas Hudson's comic lyrics for *Walker, the Two-penny Postman*, published in London in 1818,[3] and the lyrics were published in Newcastle in the late 1830s,[4] and in the 1840s.[5]

O, the neet was pick dark, and a strang wind did roar,
When abuen the Cat's Arse wor awd keel ran ashore;
To loss a hyel tide vext wor fat Skipper sore,
For she stuck there as tight as a post, man:
To get her afloat, aw wor strength winna' dee,
Says Dick, let's all hands back to toon on the spree,
And fast in the huddock we'll leave the pee dee,
To be frighten'd to deeth wi' the ghost, man.

They'd scarce jump'd ashore when pee dee the sly rat,
Got out and ran down to a style, where he sat
Till the bullies cam up, then he squall'd like a cat;
O, marraws, roar'd Dick, what a ghost, man!
Such yells in the dark made the brave bullies stop;
And down deed as mutton, the Skipper did drop;
Cries Dick we're poor men nobbit gawn on the hop,
Hev mercy on us Maister ghost, man.

To the regions belaw, cried the ghost, come away!
Then the Skipper jump'd up, shouting, pray hinnies, pray!
Ye knaw Gospel, ki' Dick, so kens best what to say,
Speak ye to this monstrous ghost, man!
With their hair right on end, and their blood like to freeze,
Myest deav'd with great yells, they dropp'd down on their knees,
And blubber'd and cried, we'll de owt that ye please,
Nobbit leave us alyen, hinny ghost, man.

When off the ghost flew with a terrible scream:
They ran into a house where they sell cruds and cream;
My sarties, astonish'd the wifie did seem,
When they swore how they'd mawl'd a greet ghost, man;
But had they but knawn it was nobbit pee dee,
They wad hammer'd his ribs, just to letten him see,
That to put them in fear he'd hev much mair to dee,
Than to yelp in the dark like a ghost, man.

6

The song sided with the boy against the bullies, and another song sided with workers against the militia.

The Northumberland and Newcastle volunteer corps of cavalry was formed in 1819, the year of the 'Peterloo' massacre of innocent demonstrators in Manchester. The volunteer's commander was the coal-owner, Charles John Brandling,[7] and the

troops were reportedly 'fine-looking men, smartly dressed', but there was a 'popular prejudice against yeomanry corps in time of peace'.[8] In the 1820s the house-painter James Morrison's *The Newcastle Noodles* was popular,[9] and when the volunteers appeared on the streets in their blue uniforms in the 1840s it was an 'invariable signal for unkempt urchins to assail them with the most uncomplimentary epithets' and 'doggerel' verse.

Blue-legged Bumler,
Cock-tail tumler,
Fireside soulger,
Daurna gan te war. [10]

In 1848 J.P. Robson's narrator in *The Militia* had been a fatalistic 'recruit',[11] but Corven's *He Wad be a Noodle* was different. *The Jolly Waggoner* had been popular tune for 200 years, but Wilkins Micawber had recently 'sung' *Ge ho Dobbin* to it in the Fleet Prison in London in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, which was published from May 1849 to November 1850.

Wor Geordie yen day, the great slaverin cull,
He wad be a noodle, and act like a feul;
Wor aud wife advised him, sic nonsense to drop,
But he wad be a noodle, nought his notion could stop.

For he wad be a noodle,
A souger-like noodle,
For he wad be a noodle,
The slaverin cull.

To be a brave volunteer, was Geordie's desire,
Smash he lang'd for a gun, at the pigeons to fire;
At neets he wad dream, bout his gun and fine claes,
And how aw the lasses, his figure wad praise.
When he was a brave noodle, &c.

When he first gat his gun man, a'll never forget,
How he freeten'd to fits, poor black puddin Bet;
Wiv his kite full o' yel, and his gun iv his hand,
Gox, he ordered twee tripe wives, to liver and stand.
For he wad be, &c.

At the aud riding schuil, he larnt reet aboot,
But his knees they stuck in, and his toes they stuck oot;
His heart it was firm, and as tough as his belt,
So defying all danger, to the moor he did pelt.
For he wad be, &c.

When they gat to the moor, for the prize they did fire,
Then Geordie's ambition, gat higher and higher;
So he tuik up his gun, gox, he couldn't tell how,
He fired reet past the target, and kill'd an aud cow.
Unfortunate noodle, &c.

He com doon frae the moor, with less glory and pride,
And he walked aw deplored, tiv he com to the side;
When a wife frev a window, chanced to let summut drop,
Gox, she spoiled Geordie's claes, man frae bottom to top.
For he wad be, &c.

Geordie sent in his kit, for he'll noodle nae mair,
He thought of misfortune's, he'd haddin his share;
Six pound for the cow, he paid down lads aw's sure,
Geordie winna forget, when he marched to the moor.
For to be a brave, &c. [12]

Reportedly this was Corven's 'first markedly successful' song.[13] The narrator and 'Geordie' have the same mother and acquaintances, and had experienced 'summut' - probably the contents of a chamber pot – being thrown on them from a window in the Side; but the criticism came from inside the working-class, so he was 'Wor Geordie', not somebody else's.

The Newcastle publican Joshua Innes Bagnall had written two verses of *Yer Gannin to be a Keelman* and set them to *Jeanette and Jeanotte*, a tune associated with lyrics about a young woman lamenting that her lover was going to be a soldier. It was at least 140 years old,[14] and John Ross had published the words in Newcastle in the 1840s.[15] Corven had Bagnall's 'kind permission' to use his verses and added a middle verse in which a 'friend' advised a 'greet big slaverin' cull' – someone like a bull or ram which had been rejected by its herd - not to go 'slavin' like a horse' as a keelman.

Yer gannin to be a keelman, ye great big slaverin' cull,
Now luik how hard ye'll hae to work, and how hard ye'll hae to pull;
Ye'll hae to powey wiv a huik, till yor shoother's very sair,
But Jacky tyek a friends advice, and think of that nae mair:
When ye wear yor flannin' drawers, and yor stockins' made of blue,
As sure as aw is stannin' here, ye'll then begin to rue;
With yor legs half down the huddock, and the pipe stuck in yor mouth,
Ye'll be gannin' doon the river, and ye'll not knaw north frae sooth.

*The skipper he will byest ye sair, when he gets ye in his paws,
He'll myek ye work byeth day and neet, and often crack yor jaws;
Ye'll wish ye were at schuil agyen, or wanderin' doon the burn,
I'steed of slavin' like a horse, sic nonsense man aw spurn:
Ye'll be comin' hyem at neets, with yor fyece all ower black,
And ye'll lie an snore aside the fire, and never gis yor crack,
But Jacky tyek yor friends advice, for aw's sure aw wish thou weel,
And never trim a shull of coals, or work aboard a keel.

When there is a gale of wind, ye'll begin to curse and sweer,
Ye'll hev girdle cyek and bacon, but not a drop of beer;
With trimmin' coals and smokin', ye'll be as stupid as a goose,
Smash, ye'll be sae tired wi workin, man, ye'll not can crack a louse:
If aw was Betty Todd, or yor canny uncle Ned,
Aw wad tyek a rope and skelp yor back, and set ye off to bed,
But Jacky tyek a friends advice, a porter poke-man be,
If ye gan to be a keelman, ye'll rue till the day ye dee. [16]

Keel-work was a dying trade, thanks to the mechanised 'spouts' below Tyne Bridge that loaded coal directly into sea-going colliers, but not all keelmen or their wives were unhappy.

Corven set *The Happy Keelman* to *Let's awa to the Bridal*, a tune that was over 120 years old.[17] The keelman's wife narrator knew that he loved her, their children and his *marrows* (workmates), and he liked 'a good gill' (two doubles) and the 'fine singing' at The Shades; but he hated 'teetotaller bodies' that 'runs doon guid whisky and yell', and despised 'Great scholars and cockneys' who 'scoff' at keelmen, pitmen and *trimmers*, the men who spread coal evenly in colliers to stop them capsizing.

Dayleet in the east was just peeping,
The stars seem'd to bid yen good neet,
As a poor honest keelman leet hearted,
Toddled off tiv his days wark aw reet;
Nae ambition or pride his mind troubled,
For he toss'd aw sic stuff to the deil,
He lov'd nought but his wife and his bairns,
His marrows, his beer, and his keel.

The pure morning air was sae caller,
A blessing he always enjoy'd,
For he like the lark gat up early,
Smash, he lik'd to be always employ'd;
For his bairns he toil'd hard day and neet, man,
There was nane like poor Geordie could feel,
He was happy, what mair could he want,
Wiv his marrows, his beer, and his keel.

When his day's wark's aw dune he'd come hyem,
Wiv his feyce just as black as the deil,
While the bairns wad cry mother, here's daddy,
Coming hame wi Will Brown frae the keel;
His bit lassie with joy then would meet him,
And the younger bairn's creep to the door,
While his wife happy smil'd as he cuddl'd,
And kiss'd them aw ower and ower.

He hates aw teetotaler bodies,
That runs doon guid whisky and yell,
And he swears that good eating and drinking,
Brings ony man out of his shell;
He's fond of aw sorts of enjoyments,
Keelman-like, gox, they're aw rummy blades,
For he oft calls to hear the fine singing,
And hev a good gill at the Shades.

Now rich folks may slight a poor keelman,
And say, ignorance myeks him a brute,
But he mebbies knaws mair then they think on,
Though little of grammar ne doubt;
Great scholars and cockneys may scoff us,
But true friendship we never conceal,
We dee as we like to be dune te,
Thó' we work for wor bread in a keel.

The keelman, the pitman, and trimmer,
Through this world like the rest they mun pass
And if poor, what the odds, smash my hoggers,
They can still treat a friend wiv a glass;
Nae ambition nor pride their mind troubles,
For they toss aw sic stuff to the deil,
They love their bit wives and their bairns,
Their marrows, their beer, and their keel. [18]

Hard-working manual workers were morally superior to their supposed 'betters'.

Corven set *The Rise in Baccy* to the tune associated with *The King of the Cannibal Islands*, whose lyrics were about a castaway sailor marrying a king's daughter, though 'Cannibal' probably derived from 'Carib', a native of the Caribbean, where cannibals were uncommon.[19] The 'pitman' narrator knew that shopkeepers 'try aw tricks and schemes they can' and he was particularly angry at those 'tryin' to rob poor workin' folk' by raising the price of tobacco, so he suggested a boycott.

Now Geordie sell yor baccy box,
Wor smokin's dune its true begox,
Smash, aw wish we had them in the stocks,
That's gyen and rais'd wor baccy:
It's queer times noo without a joke,
When pitmen canna raise a smoke,
Man, aw wish they had their heeds aw broke,
For tryin' to rob poor workin' folk;
They may try aw tricks and schemes they can,
To take the brass frae every man,
But hang them lads, we canna stand,
To let them raise wor baccy.

Aud Betty Carr, and wor lang Jin,
Byeth at the toon gat takin' in,
Aud Betty cried oot, what a sin—
To charge sae dear for baccy:
Now, wor lang Jin kept a huikster's shop,
To sarve pit folks, but what a drop,
They bundled Bet out neck and crop,
And myed lang Jin shut up her shop;
Threehapence farthin' for half an ounce,
Gox, things is risin' wiv a bounce,
Dash! how their hides aw'd like to trounce,
That's gyen and rais'd the baccy.

When winter mornin's nips wor toes,
The pipe oft warms a cheps' caud nose,
So they cannot be wor friends, but foes,
That's gyen and rais'd wor baccy:
The wisest sages, and greatest men,
The virtue of a pipe did ken,

Frae the keelman to the king the syem,
But now we'll hae to leav'd alyen;
We'll hae hot-beds and grow wor awn,
Then aw their shops to pot may gan,
We'll close their doors aye every yen,
That's gyen and rais'd wor baccy.

At neets when aw come frae the pit,
Aw sits and cracks, or smokes a bit,
And wonders aw the time aw sit
'Bout them raisin' wor baccy:
It's greatly talk'd amang wor folk,
That the Royal Family's learnt to smoke,
But that's aw lees yen to provoke,
They winna puff me with that smoke;
If we catch the cheps aboot wor raw,
My eyes, we'll crack each greedy jaw,
There dandy toppin's weel we'll claw,
For raisin' wor bit baccy.

So now ye lads of coaly Tyne,
Take this bit advice of mine,
Chewin' and smokin' aw wad resign,
Till they lower the price of baccy:
Aw wad see them aw toss'd in the sea,
Or tarr'd and feather'd for a spree,
Smash, afore they'd get their price of me,
Aw wad myek them aw the country flee;
The good time's never come to pass,
For we'll still be poor, if we save nae brass,
Now that's the meaning, so drink yor glass,
And be careful aboot yor baccy. [20]

The names Corven mentioned were probably not those of real people.

The tune of *Dan Tucker* had been popularised in the USA by the Virginia Minstrels in 1843, but by 1844 the Hutchinson Family used it for a 'song for emancipation'.[21] Corven had been brought up not far from The Shades and the narrator of *The Shades Saloon* acknowledged that Whitfield had been the first to bring 'concerts to wor toon' and 'aw the great stars down frae London', including 'a comic chep they caw Costello' and Booth the dancer; so he urged his audience to 'patronise' an establishment that 'bangs' (beats) 'them aw byeth north and south' and exhorted other landlords to open similar venues.

Aw winna jaw nor preach a sarmin,
Nor freetin' folks wiv ought alarmin';
So haud yor jaws and aw sit doon man,
Tiv aw tell aboot wor shades saloon man.

Whe wad think't but smash it's truth man,
It bangs them aw byeth north and south man,
The landlord tee desarves a crown man,
For bringin' concerts to wor toon man.

The Shades Saloon it was the first man,
Then others com oot wiv a burst man;
But wiv aw their bounce, and aw their quizzin',
The Shades Saloon still gans on fizzin'.

Whe wad think't, but smash it's truth man,
It bangs them aw byeth north and south man,
Byeth rich and poor alike respected,
Cause nought for their comfort is neglected.

Whitfield, it's true ye'll think aw'm funnin',
Brought aw the great stars doon frae Lunnon;
And aw heard say, when stars was deun sir,
He'd gan hissel' and fetch the meun sir.

Whe wad think't but smash it's truth man,
It bangs them aw byeth north and south man,
Wiv aw their tricks, and moves advancin',
There's nyen hes a chep like Booth for dancin'.

Twee harps play bonny aw the neet man,
And wives like angels sing sae sweet man;
But a comic chep they caw Costello,
Bangs aw the world he's sic a fellow.

Whe wad think't, but smash it's truth man,
There's few can equail'd in the south man,
The Blamphin family, whe can beat man?
Their music's grand, it's quite a treat man.

Drink Whitfield's health, the company roun' man,
He first brought concerts to wor toon man,
Nyen had the pluck tiv he begun sir,
Then rooms like mushrooms sprung up sune sir.

Whe wad think't but smash its truth man,
It bangs them aw byeth north and south man,
So drink success to wor and toon man,
And patronise the Shades Saloon man.

Corven set *The Goose Club* to *Derry Down*, also known as *The World Turned Upside Down*, and his lyrics described how two fishwives joined a club, paid into a common fund each week and drew lots for a goose every so often.

Twee Newcassel fishwives being fond of choice grub,
Byeth went doon to Sandgate, and join'd a goose club;
There they met wiv aud cronies, and myed a great fuss,
They swore agyen fish, for they'd eat nought but goose.

Tommy Wood, Tom the killer, and the fam'd Bobby Knox,
Cuckoo Jack, Tar and Feather, and others in flocks;
Besides the aud shrimp wife, sat smoking sae crouse,
'Mang the rest of the folks, for to draw for the goose.

Now they sat and they fuddled there all the neet lang,
And cheer'd up their hearts wi mony a sang;
But two of a trade, they say seldom agree,
So the fishwives they fought for to finish the spree.

They fought, and they swore there, aw the hyel neet,
But the landlord at last, turn'd them byeth on the street;
Cryin' there ye twee fishfaa's get oot of maw house,
Wey ye hunger wife dog, ye mun first gis a goose.

Yor goose ye twee fishfaa's, ye've nobbut just joined
Get oot ye auld robber, yor oot of yor mind—
Just ye hand oot a goose, or ye'll hae little gains—
For we'll start, and we'll break every yen of yor panes.

At last there was peace, but they little did ken,
They were in for their hidings frae byeth of their men;
For their men being mates, they'd com hyem for some grub,
But their wives had byeth vanish'd, and join'd a goose club.

When they gat on the Quay, yen gat sic a crack,
And smash, what a scene, down she went on her back;
Their men had just catch'd them, how their hides they did drub,
Gox, they'l never forget when they join'd the goose club.

Now they're stuck in the fish market, and things is myed reet,
But they will never forget the sprees of that neet;
For their husbands thro' spree, often gives them such rubs,
As keeps them from drinking, or joining goose clubs.

Corven was confident that his Tyneside audiences would know 'Cuckoo Jack', and other local characters, and that the men at least would condone a husband's violence if his wife failed to meet what he considered to be his legitimate expectations.

In *Bella Gray, a Parody on Rosa Lee*, a 'keelman' narrator pines until he is as thin as a pick shaft in a sack.

Mony a bonny lass a've seen, but nane aw could adore,
Like bonny blythsome Bella Gray, she liv'd down Felling Shore;
And when awm in my fustain claes, av'e dress'd mysel sae gay,
An wiv mony a beating heart a've gyen, to meet maw Bella Gray.

O Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray,
Yor maw delight, when aw stuff maw kite,
Maw bonny Bella Gray.

The high cut and shiffle tee, she could de them byeth sae fine,
Smash, nyen could touch maw bonny queen, upon the banks of Tyne;
Aw gat in such a state wi' luve, at neets aw flogg'd wor cat,
Aw toss'd wor pee dee ower board, and thresh'd maw uncle Mat.

'Twas aw through Bella, &c.

Poor Bella tuik bad, she fretted sair, which often myed me blair,
Man, aw gat sae thin wi bubbling, gox, the folks began to stare;

How, Geordie man, thou's gettin' thin, the folks wad oft times say,
But they little kenn'd aw was in luve, with bonny Bella Gray.

'Twas aw through Bella, &c.

Maw Bella had been at Shiels yen day, and gat wet through wi rain,
'Twas that and twee black puddin's, caused poor Bella all her pain;
They grip'd her guts, curse aw sic stuff, the doctors aw things tried,
But the puddins' they had dune her trick, for maw poor Bella died.

O Bella Gray, &c.

Now ever since that time de ye knaw, a've never been mysel',
A've ge'en ower smokin' bacey, and dropp'd off drinkin' yell;
Maw claes they winna fit me now, aw's like pick shaft in a poke,
For wi thinkin' on my Bella Gray, maw heart is nearly broke.

O, Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray,
A's an undune man, for aw never can forget
Maw bonny Bella Gray.

Only those who saw Corven perform would know whether he sought sympathy for the lovesick keelman or ridiculed him.

Jane Seth had been born in Northumberland, but had been a publican in Dog Bank, near Corvan's childhood home in Pandon, at least since 1841, while the widow Jane Ormston, the landlady of the nearby Duke of York Inn, had a house full of children and grandchildren and employed three female servants. Stephen Foster had published *O, Susannah* in New York in 1848. It became a best-seller,[23] and Ross published the lyrics in Newcastle in 1849.[24] Corven used Foster's tune for *O, maw bonnie Nannie, O*, in which a Pandon 'keelman' knew that women were capable of violence. We do not hear her side of the story, but while he boasts about being able to 'send' her on errands, he cries when she hits him.

Aw was bred and born in Pandon Bank, a
keelman aw'm by trade,
Aw never pays respect to rank, cause aw's a
rummy blade;
And when aw get upon the spree, its always on
the sly,
Then aw fells Nan, and Nan fells me, and then
we blair and cry.
O, maw bonny Nannie, O, dinna cry for me,
Aw've just come doon frae Jenny Seth's,
Where aw've been on the spree.

Noo when aw gan to Ormston's, to get a pint of
beer,
Aw see sic bonny lasses man, they make me
feel aw queer,
And when aw get a pint or twee, to sing a sang
aw try,
Aw sing sae sentimental, gox, the folks begin
to cry.
O, maw bonny Nannie, O, dinna cry for me,
Aw'll gan nae mair to Jenny Seth's, to get
upon the spree.

The yell ye knaw is very caud, so with rum aw
mix her up,
And mony a time it makes me stop, to take
another sup;
Then Nannie comes to coax me out, and take me
hyem dis try,
It's then aw treat her wiv a drop, what a canny
man, folks cry.
O, maw bonny Nannie, &c.

At neets aw send her for a quairt, afore we gan to
bed,
And Nannie always gets her pairt because aw
make her hed;
And then aw send her for some tripe, which seun
aw make her fry,
Then when we get wor bellies full, aw see nae
call to cry.
O, maw bonnie Nannie, &c. 25

Sentimental and other songs travelled both ways across the Atlantic.

Nathaniel Thomas Haynes Bayly, the author of *I'd be a Butterfly*, *Oh, no, we never mention* her, and other pieces popular with London stage singers, probably wrote *She Wore a Wreath of Roses* just before he died in 1839. Joseph Philip Knight took the lyrics to New York, set them to music and published them in 1840.[26] The song traced a woman from innocent girl with a wreath of roses to a young woman with a bridal wreath and finally to an old woman with thinning hair under a widow's 'sombre cap'.[27] Ross later published the lyrics in Newcastle,[28] and J.P. Robson wrote a parody in 1849.[29] In 1850 Corven's *Parody on She Wore a Wreath of Roses* had a 'Cockney' narrator who encountered a 20-stone woman who refused to pay for 144 oysters, six plates of beef and potatoes and 12 pots of 'heavy' ale, and it took four policemen to arrest her. After six months with a 'Morpeth crop' (very short hair) and 'grinding air' on Morpeth Goal treadmill, she joined 'the [tee]total s'ciety' and preached abstinence, but the narrator damns her as a hypocrite with 'a false front on her brow'.

She eat twelve dozen oysters,
That night when first we met,
With cockles, and she drank besides,
Twelve pots of heavy wet;
Her carcass showed no lightness,
Though, she weighed just twenty stone;
A token of the grub she'd eat,
And with porter she was blown;
I saw her but an instant,
Yet methinks I see her now,
With two black eyes, and a bloody nose,
And a plaster on her brow.

Six plates of beef and taters,
When next we met she eat;
The expressions that she used then,
Were far from being sweet;
And standing by her side, was one,
Who strove but all in vain,
To get the money for the grub,
He'd never see again;
For she eat it every morsel,
Me thinks I see her now,
Locked up by four police men,
For kicking up a row.

Once again I saw that brow,
No ringlet was then there,
For she had the Morpeth crop,
She was six months grinding air;
She wept in silent solitude,
But now once more she's free,
She's joined the total s'ciety,
And resolved to live on tea;
I saw her but an instant,
Yet me thinks I see her now,
On a chair she was a preaching,
With a false front on her brow. 30

Corven noted that Costello sang this song not only at The Shades in Newcastle, but also at London concerts.

For *Sweating System* Corven used the tune associated with *What would a man be without a woman*, whose lyrics George Watson had published over a decade earlier in Bottle Bank, Gateshead.[31] As a boy Corven may well have been one of the 'admiring and wondering spectators' at Watson's shop window which displayed the 'showy coloured frontispieces' of chapbooks,[32] and Ross had published the lyrics in Newcastle in the later 1840s.[33] Corven's lyrics stressed that 'Working men are still opprest' by 'cheap maisters' who 'spoil'd aw sorts of trade' and made employees work long hours in poor conditions for low pay. He wants them all 'put down', 'droon'd' or driven 'frae the toon', and quoted Robert Burns' 'Man's inhumanity to man, makes countless thousands mourn'.

Working men are still opprest,
For they're made slaves at the best,
But still they've got true British hearts, and what's reet lads they hae'd;
Sweating systems we'll put doon,
We'll make cheap maisters frown,
They've robbed the working man of all his poor bit daily bread:
It's plain to see, what Burns has said, which ever way ye turn,
"Man's inhumanity to man, makes countless thousands mourn;"
The poor hard working man,
He may struggle all he can,
But never while there's slop shops, will happiness return.

Sweating systems curse them all,
Aw hope we'll see them fall,
For they've been the cause of wretchedness, and many an early grave;
They've spoil'd aw sorts of trade,
Crime and misery they have made.
Smash, how aw'd like to flog or droon'd each sweating system knave:

Just luik about wor native streets, as ye wander up and doon,
Ye'll see slopsellers, jews, and rogues, aw filling up wor toon;
They're selling claes half made,
Sae cheap they spoil aw trade,
So buy nyen of their wretched stuff, and drive them frae the town.

Think on this simple rhyme,
Ye lads of coaly Tyne,
Always pass the slopping shops, when ye gan to buy new claes;
Gan to Nelson Street,
Where the working Tailors meet,
If ye patronise sic noble cheps, they'll thank ye aw their days:
If aw tradesmen was like them, their wages suen wad raise,
Then working folks would be content, and happy aw their days;
Sweating systems put them doon,
And when ye come to toon,
Gan away to Nelson Street, and order aw yor claes.

Corven's audiences evidently accepted his criticism of tailors like Joseph who employed 'rogues' like Robson.

Corven used the tune of Robson's *The Wonderful Tallygrip* for *Tom Johnson*, which lampooned a Seghill pitman.

Ov aw the lads noo, wiv which aw's acquainted,
Tom Johnson caps aw that iver aw saw,
An' what's best ov aw, he's aways contente d,
An' nyen in Seghill can a bool wiv him thraw;
He yence bool'd a Match wiv Tom Todd's Uncle Ned, man,
He thraw'd the bool twee miles an' mair without doot,
An' iver since then the poor man's been i' bed man,
For in flingin the bool he his shoother put oot.

For cuddlin the lasses Tom is just the lad, man,
He can de't se canny, he pleases them aw,
The cheps for their sweethearts are gannin cleen mad, man,
For he dazzels them aw wiv his musical jaw;
He can whussel an' sing bonny "X. Y. Z," man,
"Lord Bateman," "Lord Lovel," the "Goldin gluve," tee,
'Tother neet when aw the Pit Folks were i' bed. man,
Wiv whustlen he waken'd them aw for a spree.

An' then as for dancin' he can shuffle see bonny,
He can dance a Silph, or Hornpipe se fine,
An as for new Sixes an Reels there's sae monny,
He danc'd when the fiddlers cud never keep time;
It was at a corn supper about last November,
He danced the folks stupid that gat o' the floor,
Its just like to neet, for aw weel can remember,
The folks were se frightened they ran tiv the door.

An' ye knaw as for hewin, Tom is a fair deevil,
He can hew in a seam just three inches high,
An' what's better still, he nivver dreeds evil,
He can tell ye for sartin when danger is nigh;
Some calls him a proffit, an' others a fuel, man,
For aw that he says is as true as the day,
For he's a'wus been clivver since he went to skuel, man,
An' was learnin when aw other lads was at play.

But to tell ye the wonders Tom Johnson can dee, man,
Wad tyek me a munth wivoot any lees,
He can handle a gun, or a greyhound set free, man,
An' he's a fair deevil for climmin the trees;
He robs aw the gardens an' prigs aw the grozers,
The turnips they cannot get stopped i' the grund,
If the farmers they catch him, their eyes up he closes,
An' sumtimes for weeks he cannot be found.

When he gans to the toon he gets o' the spree, man,
Wi' the Groat Market lasses he hes a bit crack;
If their jonies wi' him they try to myek free, man,
He varry suen levels them flat on their back,
For the prissent aw think aw've just tell'd ye plenty,
Sum other neet aw may tell ye sum mair;
For be crikey if awm miss'd wor Doll 'll gan ranty
When aw tell ye the rest awl myek ye aw stare. [34]

Ross had attributed these lyrics to Joshua Bagnall.[35]

Corven set *Campbell's Grand Saloon, North Shields*, to the same tune as *The Rise in Baccy*. His 'pitman' narrator praised the 'stunnin' yell' in the bar, but it felt 'quite strange' upstairs, though the room was 'byeth nice and clean'. A 'little blacky, folks ca'd Glen' did 'fine dancin', 'bonny Kate' sang 'first-rate' and the fiddlers were comparable to 'Jemmy Hill', the 'well-known Violin player in Newcastle'. Corven evidently visited the Grand Saloon in November,[36] when Campbell planned a gallery, and his lyrics exhorted 'lads' to 'back' another former member of Billy Purvis's show.

Nobbut last pay week wor Jack and me,
Went down to Shiels to hev a spree,
Amang wor sells we did agree,
To gan and hear some singin':
The Northumberland hotel we see'd sae fine,
With dandy cheps aw drinkin' wine,
In a bonny parlour sae grand fit out,
With seats aw cover'd with bonny cloots;
What stunnin' yell wor Jacky blairs,
It's the best in Shiels, it is for fairs,

Get out ye gowk, let's gan up stairs,
And hear the folks aw singin'.
So in we booled, quite strange ye ken,
And cruiked wor hoffs amang the men,
When a little blacky, folks ca'd Glen,
Went on wi some fine dancin':
Wor Jacky laughed, and swore bygum,
A man a'll give him a glass of rum,
He's the cleverest blacky ever aw saw,

Aw wish we had him at wor raw;
Then the fiddlers struck up a tune wi' skill,
They put me in mind of Jemmy Hill *
So aw sat and smoked, and drunk my gill,
For aw like to hear folks singin'

The fiddlers play'd some bonny tones,
For a comic chep the folks ca'd Jones,
Smash, how aw ach'd ma marrow bones,
Aw gat sae sair wi laughin':
Aw thought the time was gettin' late,
When a chep cries Dick, here's bonny Kate,
She put wor Jack in sic a state;
Aw man she com, and sang first-rate,
Things went on weel sae far as aw seen,

Aw's a tidy judge, though aw luik sae green,
It's a stunnin' room byeth nice and clean,
And regular slap up singin'.

Aw heard them say, the landlord soon,
Wad hev a gallery iv his saloon,
If that's the case, all bring Jin doon,
To hear the folks aw singin':
Aw hope Campbell's Room will rise and shine,
He's myed things luik sae grand and fine,
Back him lads, for auld lang syne,
For he's brought sic talent to the Tyne;
Wor Jack and me gat up at last,
We suen gat hyem we walked sae fast,
Then we tell'd wor folks, what things had past,
At Campbell's grand saloon man.

Corven appears to have been visiting North and South Shields quite often.

For *The Folks of Aud Shields* he used the tune *Sprig of Shillelah*, which was widely known as *The Black Joke*, and the 'keelman' narrator and his *marrows* go 'on the spree' in South Shields, which had recently been granted a Corporation.

A's a Newcassel keelman come doon on the spree,
Wiv a few of my marrows, and happy we'll be;
Before we leave Shiels, or the friends we've got there:
Some folks may like crowdy, and others like kyel,
But give us Newcassel cheps plenty of yell,
It's the only true blessin' a keelman enjoys;
May we never want brass for to get it my boys,
When we visit wor friends, and the folks of aud Shiels.

Man aw like a bit spree 'mang a few honest friends,
Whose hearts like wor awn, nought but honesty kens;
For tho' rough, we are true to a friend in distress:
Frae Newcassel to Shiels a've sail'd mony a time,
Wi my keel full of coals fra the banks of the Tyne;
Aye mony a time a've come down in my keel,
To visit aud friends, and the folks aw like weel;
Lord bless their sweet faces the folks of aud Shiels.

But sometimes aw act fuilish, a's a great stubborn cull,
For aw bubble and cry like a bairn ga'n to schuil,
When aw think on the lassess of canny aud Shiels:
A man the're sae bonny sae graceful and neat,
When they gan on the floor, wey smash it's a treat,
Their feet gans like leetning, they can shuffle sae fine,
Gox there's nane in the world like the maids of the Tyne,
Then hurrah! for the lasses and the folks of aud Shiels.

The folks of aud Shiels may they still live in peace,
May they always hae plenty, may their shipping increase,
To employ all their keelmen their skippers and keels:
May their first mayor prove lucky and prosper the toon,
And send round the bellman to cry taxes doon;
May the trade of the port increase every year,
Then the Shiels folks will prosper, there's not the least fear;
Then hurrah! for the mayor and the folks of aud Shiels.

Corven added an explanatory footnote.

This Song was written at the time South Shields gained the Charter of Incorporation, and the Gentleman alluded to, having occupied a seat on the bench of Magistrates for a number of years, he was expected by the Inhabitants at that time, to be the most likely person to fill the important office of Mayor.—E. CORVEN. 37

Richard Shortridge owned a glass and alkali works in South Shields, and had been against incorporation, but after the banker John Clay led a successful campaign they both wanted to be mayor.[38] Corven set *The New Mayor of South Shields* to the tune of *Chapter of Donkies*, which was associated with the Newcastle shoemaker William Midford's *Cappy* of 1816.[39] This 'original Song, written by Mr E. Corven, for Mr. W. Thompson, the favourite Local Singer', had been 'sung by him at the Saloon, South Shields, with unbounded success'. The lyrics urged enfranchised workers to support Shortridge in the hope he would oppose 'roguish' Newcastle Corporation and regularly visitor Billy's Saloon.

Come lay up yor lugs now ye cheps of South Shiels,
Whether carpenters, blacksmiths, or trimmers of keels;
We'll hev Mr. Shortridge to be South Shields Mayor,
And sit an give laws in a bonny glass chair.

What a job for glass makers, how astonish'd they'll gaze,
If Shortridge is mayor they'll hev wark aw their days;
They'll hev double prices, for brass, they'll not care,
And they'll work ave mair neet shifts when Shortridge is mayor

We'll now hev wor candlesticks aw myed of glass,
And sport wor glass quizzers in the streets as we pass;
We'll smoke with glass pipes, and nee langer be feuls,
We'll hev glass chairs, and crackets, and bonny glass steuls.

To poor rates and taxes, we'll then put a stop.
And stick Dolly Peel in a fishmonger's shop,
And as for Tom Place, he may sing happy land,
For if he's myed sheriff he'll sell nee mair sand.

What feuls we hev been now, how strange and how funny,
To let Newcassel folks cheat huz oot of wor money;
But we'll clean oot the river, and let the rogues see,

Newcassel's a midden to what South Shields will be.

We gat the conservancy wiv a tueff wrestle,
And w'll seun hev a mayor to spite roguish Newcassel,
For conservancy lads, we seun myed them aw yield,
So they'll get nee mair Shields' brass their fine streets to beild.

So if Shortridge gets mayor, wiv his robes and fine gown,
He'll often come in, to see wor fine saloon,
When he sees wor glass lamp, and aw things see stunnin'.
He'll swear that South Shields will seun surpass Lunnun.

So keep up yor hearts now, ye lads of south side,
And in spite of Newcassel, ye mun keep up yor pride;
So fill up yor glasses, and drink to the fair,
Give three cheers for and Shields when she gets a new mayor. 40

Dolly Peel had been born in South Shields in 1782.[41] She sold smuggled brandy, tobacco, cigars, lace, scents and other goods, and when the press gang came after her husband Ralph she kept them at bay at their home in Shadwell Street until he escaped out of a window. In June 1812, when war broke out with the North American colonists, a crowd attacked the press gang, but they captured Dolly's husband and son.[42] Dolly sneaked on board the man o' war, hid, and was discovered, but was allowed to stay on board to nurse sick and wounded sailors. She eventually received a pardon and her husband and son were released and exempted from being press-ganged. She hawked smuggled goods and became known for her wit, stories and poems.[43]

For *South Shields Corporation* Corven used the tune associated with Midford's *XYZ at Newcastle Races*.[44]

Ye've all heard tell o' canny Shiels, that place of great renown sir,
Now that's the place were aw was born, it is a canny toon, sir,
There's aw things there frae fuils to creels,
There's skippers tee wi' bonny keels;
There's folk's weel dress'd, and some in rags,
Soup kitchens tee to stuff yor bags,
There's rates and taxes folks to fash,
They cheat the poor, daug aw such trash,
They're spoilin' canny Shiels man.
Ye mebbies knaw the friends that's there, begox they're such a squad man,
They're rummins for a spree my lad, and stunners for a haud man,
There's Dolly Peel, and Jacky Wright,
And Hannah wiv her fish sae bright,
There's Bella Carr that stole the stays,
And pawn'd aw Billy Jackson's claes,
Besides Tom Place that hawks the sand,
And trails his cuddy's ower the land,
To mence wor canny Shiels man.
They're gan to hev a Mayor begox, and stunnin' Corporation,
And then South Shields aws sure will be, the best toon in the nation;
Then every man will hev a shop,
Folks winnet put things in the pop,
The working men will aw be mayors,
And sit like Kings in easy chairs,
They'll think nae mair about the past,
But swear the good time's come at last,
When we have wor Corporation. 45

Corven sometimes, named real people.

In July 1850 Billy Purvis's booth had blown down in Blyth,[46] and narrowly escaped being burned. Corven used the tune of *Merrily Dance the Quaker's Wife*, which was at least 140 years old, for *Blyth in a Breeze*.

Last Sunday neet—smash what a seet,
Wor canny toon teuk fire, sir,
And crowds o' folks ran down the street,
Gox, aw thowt they'd never tire, sir;
Aw thowt the fire wor show would seize,
So out aw jump'd frae bed, man,
The folks said Blyth was iv a bleeze,
As sure as maw nyem's Ned, man.

Now a water engine they couldn't get
Within a dozen miles, sir,
So to save wor toon frae burning down,
Some cheps teuk off the tiles, sir;
Aw sorts o' claes com tumbling out,
Wi' mony a shawl and frock, sir,
And, through neglect, folks say they spoil'd
A stunning eight-day clock, sir.

Folks left the chapels drest sae fine,
And com and gyep'd i' dozens.
And Jackey Thomson's uncle bob
Was there wiv all his cousins;
Auld Billy Purvis, tee, was there,
Luiking on wi' great suprise, sir,
Says he—"Aw thowt maw show was gyen!"
Gox, he couldn't believe his eyes, sir.

Now, a butcher's dog amang the crowd
Click'd out a chep's behind, sir,
And mony a thing was lost that day
Aw doubt they'll never find, sir;
The fishwives talk'd about the fire,
And the good auld times that's gyen, man,
How four * mushrooms at a draper's door
Had lifted a great big styen, man.

The news seun spread for mony a mile,
It's a fact, without a doubt. sir,
For the folks i' Lunnun kenn'd it a'
Before the fire was out, sir;
To see the folks a' full o' fright,
Some treat it like a farce, sir,
But if it hadn't been for some sailor cheps,
It wad been a lang way warse, sir.

Now, aw divent like to plague the folk
By singing here a' neet, sir,
So if my sang gives nae offence,
Aw hope your smiles to meet, sir;
Aw wish ye a' frae sic dangers free,
And every tax and tithe, sir,
And when aw cum back aw'll expect to see
A water engine in Blyth, sir.

A footnote explained that 'The Mushrooms alluded to is a fact'.[47]

Corven published another song without a printer's name, which was illegal. He assumed that his audiences knew about Guy Fawkes and the restoration of a Roman Catholic hierarchy, but also about the illegitimate son of an Austrian aristocrat. Julius Jacob Von Haynau was born in 1786, joined the Austrian army in 1801 and was a general by 1848. His troops suppressed insurrections in Italy and flogged women, and in 1849, when he ordered them to hang 13 Hungarian generals, his soldiers called him the 'Habsburg Tiger', but opponents called him the 'Hyena of Brescia' and 'Hangman of Arad'. His reputation spread across Western Europe and he resigned in 1850, but that September, when he visited a London brewery, two draymen beat him up.[48]

The retired military man, William Linskill, had been born into a wealthy family in Tynemouth Lodge on a 40-acre estate in North Shields in 1807. He attended Harrow School and in 1826 he became an ensign in the 28th Regiment of Foot, transferred

to the 5th Dragoon Guards in 1840, rising to Captain in 1835 and retiring in 1838. Late in 1849 the enfranchised minority in Tynemouth elected him as their first mayor.[49]

In September 1850 South Shields received its charter of incorporation, but the Chartist Ernest Jones addressed a meeting from the Town Hall steps and called the magistrates' threat to arrest local Chartist speakers illegal. A Political and Financial Reform Association was founded, but Clay was elected as mayor in November.[50]

THE

FIRST MAYOR OF SOUTH SHIELS

WRITTEN BY E. CORVEN, AUTHOR OF 'RANDOM RHYMES'.

TUNE—"The Campbells are coming."

'BOUT Popish Aggression aw's not gan to sing,
Nor Guy Fauks or Haynau to Shiels will aw bring;
For the yule time is cummin so lets banish a' care,
And a' drink success to the first South Shiels Mayor.
Then here's to the Mayor—may he thrive a' his days;
May the star of good fortune still guide a' his ways;
May he prosper wor town, wor ships and wor keels,
And leve and die honoured mang the folks of SouthShiels.

When aw's smokin' me pipe, aw oft thinks about "Clay",
For aw' sartin he'll banish a' taxes away.
Smash the Newcassel folks how astonished they'll stare,
When they read in the papers we've gat sic a Mayor.
The good time's com at last, man, we'll hae lots of cheer,
For the Mayor's gan to keep a' the keelmen in beer;
He'll scramble het guineas—man, aw seldom reveals
Or tells ony lees to the folks of South Shiels.

He'll save a' wor money, then we'll hae lots of brass;
Then a poor chep can dress for to walk with his lass:
He'll take a' the duty of bussels and wine,
And build bonny docks at the mouth of the Tine.
So lets leve and be jenick, an' let wor jokes pass,
An' banish a' sorrow and still drink wor glass;
Since we've bet a' those bullys we'll show them wor heels,
For we've gat beth a Council and Mayor for South Shiels.

The ladies of Tinmouth gov Linskill a chain,
To wear round his neck—what an honour to gain;
But what does thou think, man, we'll buy a gould chair
Besides a grand chain for wor first South Shiels Mayor.
What glorious days, lads, thor's comin ageyn,
For we'll a' leve like lords--a' things we'll ken:
We'll have hoppins and fairs, new sixes and reels;
Then hurrah for John Cl—y, the first Mayor of South Shiels!

Auld Shiels, may she prosper while the sea's constant roar
Beats wildly and nobly on her canny auld shore;
May her sons, like true Britons, still weather the breeze,
And their bark steer wi' safety thro' all foreign seas.
Then here's to the Mayor, may he thrive all his days;
May the star of good fortune still guide a' his ways;
May he prosper wor town, wor ships and wor keels,
And live and die honoured mang the folks of South Shiels. 51

On 13 December an advertisement for J.P. Robson's poems and local songs appeared in the *Newcastle Courant*.

BARDS of the TYNE, a Collection of Tyneside Songs; Price 2s 6d. POEMS and LOCAL SONGS, by J. P. ROBSON; Price 2s 6d. ORIGINAL TYNESIDE SONGS, by J. ROBSON. Price 6d.
Newcastle on Tyne: published by Peter France and Co., News Agents, 8, Side; and may be had of all Booksellers. 52

Some veterans of Billy Purvis's show were establishing themselves as entertainment entrepreneurs in their own right. *The Era* noted that William Campbell had enlarged the Albion Saloon at the Northumberland Arms Hotel in North Shields and 'prospers amazingly'. William Thompson was one of the 'old favourites' at the 'Scarbro' Spa Saloon' in South Shields, where the company was 'as attractive as usual',[53] but this was apparently the last time *The Era* noticed Thompson's venue. Ned Corven, however, was about to become politically active.

4. £4.10s.

South Shields sailors had organised mutual aid societies by the 1790s,[1] and they had a tradition of direct action, including arson, on economic issues.[2] During the war with republican France they were 'exceedingly riotous' because of the press gang,[3] and when war resumed in 1803, after a short peace, the Admiralty withdrew the gang because sailors attacked it.[4] The war boosted Tyne trade and 500 ships totalling 400,000 tons belonged to South Shields by 1809,[5] but when the war ended in 1815 there was a mass demobilisation of the Navy and the Tyne men went on strike, using military tactics,[6] and printed propaganda. *The Seaman's Complain*, set to the tune of Burns' *A Man's a Man*, appeared anonymously, but David Bass printed *The Seamen's Complaint* in Newcastle,[7] and the manuscripts of both may have been by Henry Robson, a Newcastle typographer.[8]

THE

Seaman's Complaint;

A new Song, written by a Sailor, who was present at the Battle of the Nile.

I sing the British seaman's woe,
Their pain an' grief an' a' that;
Whose hearts wi' anguish overflow,
Denied relief for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
We still may mourn for a' that;
We've shed our blood for England's guid,
An' what return for a' that.

When gallant Nelson at the Nile,
Defeat the French an' a' that;
We sailors there did share the toil,
And scorn'd to flinch for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
Our country's claim an' a' that;
To what a height of honour bright,
We rais'd her fame for a' that.

We nobly did our country serve,
Bore toils severe an' a' that;
But now we're basely left to starve,
In deep despair for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
We may complain for a' that;
Our children cry for fresh supplies,
They can't obtain for a' that.

They make us up to London hie,
For three pounds ten an' a' that;
Will that support a family?
Or life sustain for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
An' hundreds here for a' that;
Depriv'd of joy without employ,
Must famine bear for a' that.

Wi' mind indignant I survey,
This gloomy scene an' a' that;
But ev'ry dog must have his day,
And we'll have ours for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that.
The time will come for a' that;
When Fortune's smile shall pain beguile,
And break the gloom for a' that.

And see across the western main,
Hope rears her head for a' that;
We there shall full employment gain,
An' earn our *bread* for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
We'll o'er the sea for a that;
Columbia shall employ us all,
We'll happy be for a that.

Self preservation teacheth plain,
'Tis Nature's ruling law that;
Where men can not a living gain,
They'll never fight for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
Can it be thought for a' that;
We'll lend a hand to save the land,
That spues us out for a' that.

Again should War's dread trumpet sound,
And Gallia threat an' a' that;
Where will the seamen then be found,
To man your fleet for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
We ne'er were slack for a' that;
When sounds of war are heard afar,
Ye'll wish us back for a' that.

Braw canty cheer, an' routh o' gear,
Shall fortune send for a' that;
Take courage lads we need not fear,
The times will mend for a' that.
For a' that an' a' that,
Our hopes revive for a' that;
In social glee, so blyth an' free,
We'll happy live for a' that.

THE

Seamen's Complaint.

Come liften a while and I'll ſing you a ditty,
Concerning the dangers of the ſalt ſeas;
It ſurely muſt make your hearts move with pity,
To think what we ſuffer while you live at eaſe.

Whilſt in battle we fight with Britiſh blood loyal,
To our ancles in blood, ſtill our honour maintain!
No enemy ever ſhall inſult the Britiſh flag royal,
While our Britiſh Tars rule Lords of the main.

When we are out at ſea, to our ſweethearts we are drinking,
With duty and honour we ſtick to our tack;
On our wives and our families ſtill are thinking,
To return back with plenty is the hope of poor Jack.

But at laſt in battle he is deſperately wounded,
All hopes he had loſt—diſregarded he muſt go;
Up and down for his bread muſt travel and wander,
No deceptions he'll have, think what miſery and woe.

On the 14th of February, as we were ſailing,
All off Cape St Vincent on Valentine's day,
Brave Jervis and Nelſon the ſpaniards bewailing,
Great numbers were ſlaughter'd in that bloody fray.

In that deſperate action our limds were diſperſed,
Which cauſes us now your benevolence to crave,
Thank God we are at home and our lives ſaved,
So good chriſtians give ear and encourage the brave.

You ſee, my good chriſtians, we are totally diſabled
Our applications to chriſtians we are forced to make known;
Your charity beſtow, all you that are able,
And on us wounded ſeamen I hope you will not frown.

Be it ever ſo ſmall the donation you offer,
We are humbly thankful your gift to receive
Which on a future day, you may have a proffer,
That no man on earth can give.

Printed by D. Bass, 9

It took a massive military intervention to break the strike,[10] but the Seamens' Amicable Society had £4,000 in the bank by 1820 and strikers organised the Loyal Standard Association in 1824.[11] After the repeal of the Combination Acts, which criminalised trade unionists, seamen presented a silver vase to the MPs who led the parliamentary campaign.[12] In 1825 the LSA published a song entitled *The Seaman's Loyal Standard*,[13] but parliament removed some of the former rights to form trade unions and strengthened the 'conspiracy' laws.

In July 1831 some Tyne seamen worked for less than the usual £3 to £4 for a return voyage to London and two of them were 'ill-treated' in South Shields. Sailors boarded vessels about to sail and threatened their crews, but Navy sailors captured them, took them to Newcastle for trial and broke the strike. Around this time steam-powered vessels pulled a loaded collier out of the Marquess of Londonderry's port of Seaham, and so the writing was on the wall for sail-powered vessels.[14] In 1832 the Loyal Standard Association became a benefit society, but by 1834 there were over 100 steam-powered towing vessels on the Tyne.[15] In the four years to 1835 682 Tyne sailors, or almost five percent of the total, drowned.[16] There were 153 licensed hotels, inns and taverns in South Shields, and 68 of them, plus ten beer houses, were 'tied' to breweries, but a temperance society was established. In 1836 South Shields, Westoe, Harton, Whitburn, Boldon, Hedworth, Monkton and Jarrow became a Poor Law Union, and in 1838 the new Poor House housed around 215 paupers. They cost 2s 5½d a week to keep, since their diet was worse than convicts', and those who officials considered to be guilty of 'refractory conduct' got bread and water. There were 136 indoor paupers, but 16 times as many received outdoor relief, including 1,134 in South Shields, where there were many sailors' widows and orphans.[17] South Shields Political Union conducted agitation, but while physical force Chartism did not take root,[18] threats did not deter some locals from attending the Newcastle Town Moor demonstration in 1839 with a silk banner showing 'Liberty' on a globe with the slogan 'Equality and justice, man is man, and who is more?' The chair of the meeting was Thomas Hepburn from South Shields, one of the leaders of the defeated pitmen's strike of 1832. The Chartist Feargus O'Connor delivered an 'impassioned address' in South Shields market place, but the Political Union collapsed the following year.[19]

A Newcastle shipowner had remarked that 'old ships that can just keep together and swim will do',[20] but the *Star*, the first iron ship built on the Tyne, was launched at South Shields in 1840.[21] In 1841, when there were 432 shipwrights on the river and 968 on the Wear,[22] South Shields employers tried to abolish the traditional beer allowance and the Union Society claimed that though the men were supposed to get 24s a week, they had averaged between 6s 4d and 14s 7d the previous year. They went on strike, but returned on the old terms. The first twin-screw collier, the 400-ton *Bedlington*, was launched in 1842,[23] and the first iron-hulled vessel, the *Flash*, in 1843. It had two water-tight bulkheads and could carry a dozen or more passengers as well as cargo.[24] After the 1844 pitmen's strike went down to defeat the coal owners' *vend* (cartel) broke down and they shipped as much coal as they could, so market prices fell.[25] *QED*, the first steam-powered, iron-hulled collier was launched on the Tyne and could carry 320 tons,[26] but there was little investment in new vessels. After railways linked the coalfield to London, the coastal trade suffered and seamen's real wages fell lower than during the war with France,[27] while adverse winds could keep up to 600 sailing vessels in port for weeks.

In 1847 the Sunderland Chartist Thomas Dickinson was a parliamentary candidate and addressed electors from hustings in South Shields, but he later withdrew. In 1848 South Shields ships' carpenters went on strike, but the Poor Law guardians refused to relieve them, since the employers had offered 3s 6d a day.[28] The jobs of 1,000 Tyneside metal workers and labourers, 700 shipwrights and 200 sail makers and provisioners depended on the coal trade and many shipowners had a financial interest in the 150 prostitutes and 200 pubs. Brewers controlled most other pubs, supplied shipowners with alcohol and cooperated with *crimps* who entrapped unwary sailors,[29] though some used the Town Hall basement as a shipping office to avoid being shanghaied.[30] Up to half of the Tyne's 4,000 sailors were at sea at any one time and they shifted a million tons of coal to London that year. Many wooden vessels were old, poorly maintained, over-insured and undermanned, usually by four men and a boy;[31] and according to George Haswell, many were 'Crazy, rat-ridden craft', 'leaky as baskets, and only kept afloat in a heavy sea by slavish labour at the clanking, ill-contrived pumps'.

> Foul with bilge stench, vermin and dirt; cramped, dark, and comfortless in 'accommodation' for the hands; known to every sailor, sailor's wife, and Low street lad as 'floating coffins'. … Drugged by the prowling crimp, driven by necessity, or cozened by some glib-tongued ship's husband, a handful of ill-assorted 'hands', sleeping off the fumes of drink as gratuitously, as mysteriously provided, would discover that they'd 'signed articles' for the Betsy Ann, or some sister coffin, and find themselves aboard a creaking hulk, leaking already on the smooth waters of the river, though, in a sardonic phrase, 'ready for the sea'. The ship in most cases was already under weigh, slipping out of 'the Narrows' towards the 'bar', and a few kicks, a sullen growl, an invocation on the 'luck' which had brought them to such a pass would end in a mechanical assumption of the hundred duties that lie on every hand about the sailor.[32]

South Shields became an independent port in 1848,[33] but Newcastle Corporation had spent less than £400,000 of almost £958,000 of its income from river dues on improving the Tyne in 39 years.[34] Since 1830 around six percent of Tyne vessels had sunk each year, causing hundreds of deaths,[35] and Tyne seamen were not safe at home.

Only 180 of the 3,911 inhabited houses in South Shields had water laid on and most people relied on the 24 public *pants*.[36] Parliament authorised the election of Local Town Boards where the annual death rate from disease was over 23 per 1,000, if ten percent of the inhabitants agreed. In the southern Tyne district the average rate was 35 per 1,000,[37] and around 150 died of cholera in South Shields in 1849. In 1850 there was one indoor pauper to every 13 outdoor paupers, while the national average was one to two or three.

South Shields was the home port of vessels totalling 110,000 tons,[38] and 30 owners' mutual aid societies insured £1,750,000's worth of shipping,[39] but almost 70 percent of vessels were owned by one or two men.[40] The opening of

Sunderland south dock enabled Wear coal exports to rise sharply, and the port was eight miles closer to London than South Shields, while Tyne shipowners placed orders for two-thirds of new wooden vessels with Wearside yards,[41] and the Tyne remained in a poor condition, so there was economic and political friction between Newcastle Corporation and South Shields.

Hugh M'Coll was born in Glasgow around 1819, but was reared in the Highlands. From an early age he sold books in different towns, but he had settled in South Shields by 1843.[42] In January 1850 he was a member of the committee that favoured the incorporation of South Shields and a Working Men's Club opened in March.[43] There were 800 acres of sandbanks between Newcastle and the sea and the Tyne's channel was barely more than two feet deep at low tide, so parliament decided that the corporations of Newcastle, Gateshead, South Shields, Tynemouth and Jarrow, plus some industrialists, should control the river.[44] In September a man walked across the Tyne from North Shields to South Shields.[45] In October M'Coll faced charges of printing and circulating 'libellous imputations' about the South Shields spirit merchant, James Mather, and was bailed to appear at Durham Assizes.[46] Very few of the Newcastle Company of Shipwrights' apprentices completed their time,[47] but around 3,000 Tyneside workers built wooden ships, while many more worked in subsidiary trades, and South Shields' population had risen by 6,000 to almost 29,000.[48] Only 17 small steamships were registered at Newcastle and Shields and 49 Newcastle people described themselves as shipowners, but five percent of investors owned a quarter of the river's registered tonnage.[49]

On 1 January 1851 the Mercantile Marine Act's 22 regulations included requiring sailors to register with shipping masters at shipping offices. The men demanded £4 10s for a London voyage from 1 October to 31 March, £3 10s between 1 April and 30 September and £3 a month for foreign voyages, and when the shipowners offered £4 and £3 for London voyages, the men went on strike. South Shields magistrates swore in 200 special constables, and recruited strike-breakers, especially from the Shetland Islands, but strikers mobbed 'half-marrows' (incompetent men) and tarred and feathered a few 'black-legs'. On the 24th a mass meeting formed the Seamen's Friendly Association, which cost a penny to join and became known as the 'Penny Fund'. They also elected a deputation to take a petition to parliament's Committee on the Coal Trade to demand the repeal of the Act, and called for propaganda. The Shipwrights' Union Society required members of associated benefit societies to join them, or be expelled, and on 31 January they went on strike for a pay rise and an end to apprentices being kept on for more than seven years.[50] A North Shields Presbyterian minister had recently begun publishing the weekly *North & South Shields Gazette*, which acknowledged that some of the Act's regulations were unfair, but he was relieved that the seamen were 'conducting themselves with 'propriety'.[51]

On 3 February the London *Morning Post* reported that the men were divided.

SHIELDS, FRIDAY Afternoon.—So far as the wages question are involved, the strike seems at an end, for a number of laden vessels have left our port, the men receiving the full wages; and on the first sea-tide a large fleet of colliers will leave this and the adjacent port for the Thames.

No doubt a very great misconception of many of the provisions of the Mercantile Marine Act exists in the minds of a very great number of the seamen. The Local Marine Board of this port has just issued a notice explaining and defending the provisions of the Mercantile Marine Act.

This notice will do good, no doubt, as the men took their views of the measure from the various speakers who have addressed them. The speakers knew a little about many of the provisions of the act as the men themselves. There is nothing to induce the belief that the great body of the sailors on strike are prepared to commit any gross acts of violence. In a former communication it was stated that several vessels laden for foreign ports were detained in the harbour on account of the crews refusing to sign articles in accordance with the provisions of the act, either in the shipping-office or on board. To-day some of them have signed articles on board, and the vessels will clear out. [52]

That day Captain Frederick William Beechey of the Royal Navy, who was responsible for the Marine Department of the Board of Trade,[53] met representatives of North and South Shields strikers at the Northumberland Arms in North Shields. They told him plainly that they did not trust the ships' masters, and pointed out that young men preferred to sail out of Liverpool and other ports.[54] That day a South Shields printer and a songwriter supported them.

Robert Dobby had been a printer, bookseller, bookbinder and stationer at 67 King Street, South Shields, at least since 1850,[55] and on 3 February 1851 he published two songs on a single sheet. The first was to be sung to a 'blackface' minstrel tune from the 1830s, which was associated with the US song *Zip Coon*, and the second to Charles MacKay's tune for *There's a Good time Coming*, a song in which Henry Russell exhorted 'boys' to 'wait a little longer' in 1846.[56] J.P. Robson had published *There's a Grand Time Comin* in Newcastle in 1849 and promised a utopian future for 'collier lads', but only if they waited.

Maisters then will hae to put,
Nyen need fear thor anger;
Viewer's sons wor traps 'ill shut,
Wait a wee bit langer![57]

Corven's lyrics were rather different, and he and Dobby put their names on the sheet in spite of the possible consequences.

£4. 10s.

Or, the Sailors' Strike.

Tune.--Zip Coon.

Hurrah, my lads, for four pund ten,
Unite, unite, North Country Men,
And Shipping Offices smash them all,
They first mayde sailors' wages fall.
A sailor cannot raise warm claes,
They rob him in sae mony ways,
But hang them lads, we'll let them see,
We'll hae four pund ten, or walk the quay,

CHORUS.

Then Hurrah, my lads, for four pund ten,
Unite, unite, North Country Men;
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah agyen,
Hurrah, my lads. for four pund ten.

These shipping men live snug ashore,
Free from hardships wor brass they store,
While we poor sailors plough the main,
And scarce a living can we gain;
They mayke up fines and think we're soft,
But still the cherub sits aloft,
That shines upon life's weary track,
And safely guides poor honest Jack.
Then, hurrah, my lads, &c.

What's three pund ten for a sailor's wage,
Who risks his life where billows rage,
Who stands the peril of the sea,
To keep a wife and family,
Who up slippery shrouds aloft must climb,
'Midst frost and snow in winter time,
Yet owners grumble and cry out when
The sailor axes four pund ten.
Then hurrah, my lads, &c.

The sailors' strike will play the deuce,
Wor police then will be ne use,
The public hooses may shut up,
We'll hae ne small beer seun to sup;
We'll hae bonny wark or else aws wrang,
If sailors keep the strike up lang,
But aw hope they'll thrive and act like men,
And gain thor reets and four pund ten.
Then hurrah, my lads, &c.

What a state and wives will seun be in,
When they hae ne bacey, tea, nor gin,
When they'll hae ne currants for their wigs,
When i'steed o' priests there's nowt but prigs,
The pawn shops then they'll be chock full,
Noo folks wi brass will hae the pull,
Poor empty pockets seun we'll ken,
If the strike lasts lang for four pund ten.
Then hurrah, my lads, &c.

Now aw ye Shields cheps, North or South,
Believe me lads aw've spoke the truth,
And when'eer owt happens in the toon,
Aw'll take maw pen and write it doon,
May all trades prosper in the land,
May sailors still gang hand in hand,
May the good time come, & what's best ye ken,
Aw wish the sailors four pund ten.
Then hurrah, my lads, &c.

THE FUNNY TIME COMIN'.

There's a funny time comin' lads,
A funny time comin',
When sailors they'll hae four pund ten,
They'll hae nae fines nor grumlin then,
I' the funny time comin';
I'steed o' beer we'll aw drink wine,
To mayke wor bodies stranger,
We'll hae nae frigates i' the Tyne,
Wait a little langer.

CHOS.—There's a funny time comin' &c.

There's a funny time comin' lads,
A funny time comin',
We'll hae wor baccy lowered agyne,
We'll a' wear dandy watch guards then,
I' the funny time comin';
We'll hae nae poor folks i' the toon,
Misfortune lads, we'll hang her.
We're sure to hae a fall o' snaw,
Ony wait a little langer.

CHOS.—There's a funny time comin' &c.

There's a funny time comin' lads,
A funny time comin',
Carpenters then they winnot strike,
They'll hae thor 'lowance when they like,
I' the funny time comin';
Then aw thor seams wi' beef they'll caulk,
'Twill mayke thor bodies stranger,
Landlords then they'll use nae chalk,
Ony wait a little langer.

CHOS.—There's a funny time comin' &c.

There's a funny time comin' lads,
A funny time comin',
We'll aw hae shillings 'stead o' pence,
We'll hae tea parties on the Bents,
I' the funny time comin';
There's mony a true word spoke in jest,
We'll be humbug'd ne langer,
We'll de away wi' German Yeast,
Ony wait a little langer.

CHOS.—There's a funny time comin' &c.

There's a funny time comin' lads,
A funny time comin',
We'll hae no shippin' maisters then,
We'll mayke them work like other men,
I' the funny time comin';
We'll hae nae cutlashes on the Quay,
The bairns and wives to anger;
We'll hae a better North Shields M——r,
Ony wait a little langer.

CHOS.—There's a funny time comin', &c.

EDWARD CORVEN.

South Shields, February 3rd, 1851.

R. Dobby, Printer, 67, King Street.

58

That same day Beechey complained that the strikers' delegates had not reported his arguments to the rest of the strikers, but while the *Sunderland Herald* called for the 'strongest condemnation' of those involved in any 'riotous and overbearing assemblage and even violence' and for 'the instigators of the movement' to 'be detected', the *Newcastle Guardian* argued that there was 'no necessity for the *Hecate* war steamer', proclamations, special constables and Newcastle policemen. On the 7th Hull, Seaham and Shields delegates spoke to a mass meeting of strikers in Sunderland and next day a crowd on the town's pier threw stones at blacklegs taking vessels to sea. On the 10th Liverpool strikers burned an effigy of Henry Labouchere, the President of the Board of Trade, and next day strikers marched through Stockton and Hull strikers were involved in a 'serious fracas' with police. One constable looked likely to die and six seamen went to prison. By the 15th the 'whole of the men' in northern England were determined not to go to sea for less than £3 10s in summer and £4 10s in winter. Delegates from Hartlepool, Sunderland, Seaham, Newcastle, Blyth and North and South Shields met in South Shields, received letters of support from men in Hull, Great Yarmouth, Liverpool and Dundee, and agreed to send a delegation to parliament. Next day a North Shields crowd tarred and feathered a blackleg.[59]

Shipowners recruited more blacklegs, especially from the Shetlands. Three registered under the Act,[60] but one was tarred in North Shields on the 17th. Next day the government promised to suspend the most 'obnoxious' regulations and 'consider' others, but on the 19th blacklegs took ships to sea under the protection of a Navy warship. On the 21st South Shields magistrates swore in 150 special constables,[61] but the *Newcastle Courant* reported that the strike committee had boarded vessels and tackled 'half-marrows' and women and men ashore had treated some of them roughly until police intervened with cutlasses. In one week 65 vessels had sailed, but 'there remains an immense mass of ships ready for sea, and which are at present blocking up the harbour'.[62] Next day Shields strikers called for 'standing committees' in every port to 'watch over the proceedings of Government' and for 'public meetings for the resumption of active measures, should it be deemed necessary'. Shields strikers tarred and feathered two blacklegs, one of whom was an Irishman, and burned two effigies of Labouchere, one of which had two faces. On the 23rd the strikers went back to work 'under protest', but their propaganda had impressed the *North & South Shields Gazette*.

> The ballad-mongers have thriven excellent well upon the agitation, and two or three of the seamen having been 'kindled into poesy by wrong', have spun a yarn in verse. We have 'Sailors' Complaints', 'Funeral dirges', the 'Country's rum', poetic depreciations of the navigation laws and Mercantile Marine Act, predictions as to the fate that all 'black sheep' may expect – the term being applied to those among the men who did not stand out with the rest – and descriptions of the local disturbances in great variety of doggerel.[63]

These songs have not been traced, but there were now 4,000 organised sailors in Shields.

On 7 March, at Durham Assizes, M'Coll offered to call 'respectable witnesses' to prove he was in the Highlands at the time of the alleged libel and his workers would testify that 'they were not in the slightest degree aware of the printing and publishing of the placard'. There was no contrary evidence, so he went free.[64] The shipwrights' strike was defeated by the 10th, but their employers agreed to convert the men's beer allowances into cash.[65]

On the 15th a correspondent of the Tory *Newcastle Journal* claimed that the Whig Labouchere had 'tricked' the sailors' delegates, since two Hartlepool men had returned from London with wages of 1s and 2s 6d, because of fines, so seamen were organising a national strike. The *Journal* noted that the Act had 'emanated from a Whig Liberal and Free Trade Government' and the Newcastle Seamen's Friendly Association organised a benefit concert.

> This is the first general appeal that has been made since the strike to the sympathy the public, and it was responded to in *a manner which does* credit to the community. The Committee assembled at the White House, Pilgrim Street, and then, headed by a band of music and with banners flying, proceeded to the Lecture Room, having a large crowd in their wake. It is scarcely necessary to say the spacious hall was crowded.

Thomas Boutland sang *There's a Good Time Coming* with all its 'beauty and originality', and the 'effect upon the audience' was 'almost electrical'.[66] Meanwhile, Ned Corven was courting a seaman's daughter.

William Anderson's wife, Mary, had been born in Poole, Dorset, around 1771, but in December 1799 their daughter Isabella was baptised in the New Presbyterian Chapel, formerly the Low Meeting House, in South Shields. In 1819 Isabella married Robert Arrowsmith, who had been born in South Shields in 1801, and Isabella junior was baptised in St. Hilda's Church in 1828. In spring 1841 70-year-old Mary Anderson, 42-year-old Isabella Arrowsmith and her 20-year-old daughter Mary, all women of 'Ind[ependent]' means, lived at 11 Union Alley, Westoe, with 15-year-old Robert Arrowsmith, an apprentice shipwright, 12-year-old Isabella junior, nine-year-old Thomas and two 35-year-old lodgers, a stonemason and a Scottish shoemaker.

In 1851 Christ Church, North Shields, had 'pens', not pews, for the poor and the woodwork 'emitted a fungoid odour of dry rot'. The flagged floor was cracked, 'forming crannies in and out of which mice chased during service', and the place was 'damp and chill and moldy'.[67] Isabella Arrowsmith junior and Edward Corven had been living in the parish for their banns to be read out three times at Christ Church in three months, before they were able to marry there on 17 March. Isabella was illiterate and made her mark in the register, while Edward signed his name, but his trade was recorded as 'Paniter' (painter), and he claimed to be a 'Minor', which meant being under 21, even though he was 23, as was Isabella. His father had died ten years earlier and Isabella's father may either have been at sea, or have died, and the witnesses appear to have been a marine store owner and his stepson.

1851. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Tynemouth in the County of Northumberland

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
184	1851 March 17th	Edward Corven	a Minor	Bachelor	Painter	This Parish	Matthew Corven	Mason
		Isabella Arrowsmith	of full age	Spinster	—	This Parish	Robert Arrowsmith	Mariner

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Banns or after by me, N. G. Pilkington, Curate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Edwd Corven, Isabella Arrowsmith + her mark. In the Presence of us, Thomas Harrison, George Gibbis

On 30 March 52-year-old Isabella Arrowsmith, her 19-year-old son Thomas and 80-year-old Mary Anderson lived at 30 Oyston Street, South Shields, while the newlyweds Edward and Isabella Corven lived at 1 Clive Street, Shepheards Quay, North Shields, among keelmen and seamen. Both were mis-described as '20', while Edward was an 'Artist', and gave his birthplace as Newcastle, not Liverpool. In Newcastle his mother 'Margaret Corveen', a 52-year-old widowed 'Washerwoman' born in Ireland, had escaped from Pandon and now lived alone at 157 Denton Chare, between St. Nicholas' Street and Neville Street.

On the 31st M'Coll published a song that praised the South Shields mayor John Clay and the striking seamen.

SONG.

THE SEAMEN'S STRIKE,

1851.

This Winter as our gallant Ships in coaly Tyne arrived,
Strange rumours made us all agree to moor them side by side;
When every Ship was safely moor'd, and every sail unbent,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
With his hammock, pay, and clothes-bag on shore each Seaman went.

The Mercantile Marine Act was soon to all made known,
By which our precious liberty we found would be o'erthrown;
We met—our speech was homely, but we could *feel* and *act*,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
And soon the "*Seamen's Friendly*" proved to all a mighty fact.

In our South Shields Friendly Union, are enrolled two thousand Tars,
Who glory in the Union Jack, and not the stripes and stars;
Then tempt not Seamen's loyalty—rouse not our righteous ire,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
And Foreigners will never dare to brave the British fire.

Our Owners felt for us and ours, and gave us, gen'rous men,
In the summer Seventy Shillings, and in winter Four Pounds Ten;
They clapp'd our backs and cried "submit to no obnoxious clause,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
"And we will stand by all of you, to upset these slavish laws.

Next famous Capt. Beechey came, sent by the Board of Trade,
And after lengthened interviews concessions we got made:
These we took as *First Instalments*, and prepared to get to sea,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
After planting Seamen's Unions throughout the whole country.

Now hurrah for Clay our Mayor, whose advice was always good,
And hurrah for all true hearted friends who firmly by us stood;
To each of them our warmest thanks we heartily bestow,
Blow the winds I ho! blow the winds I ho!
And now to plough the Ocean in our gallant Ships we go.

South Shields, March 31, 1851.

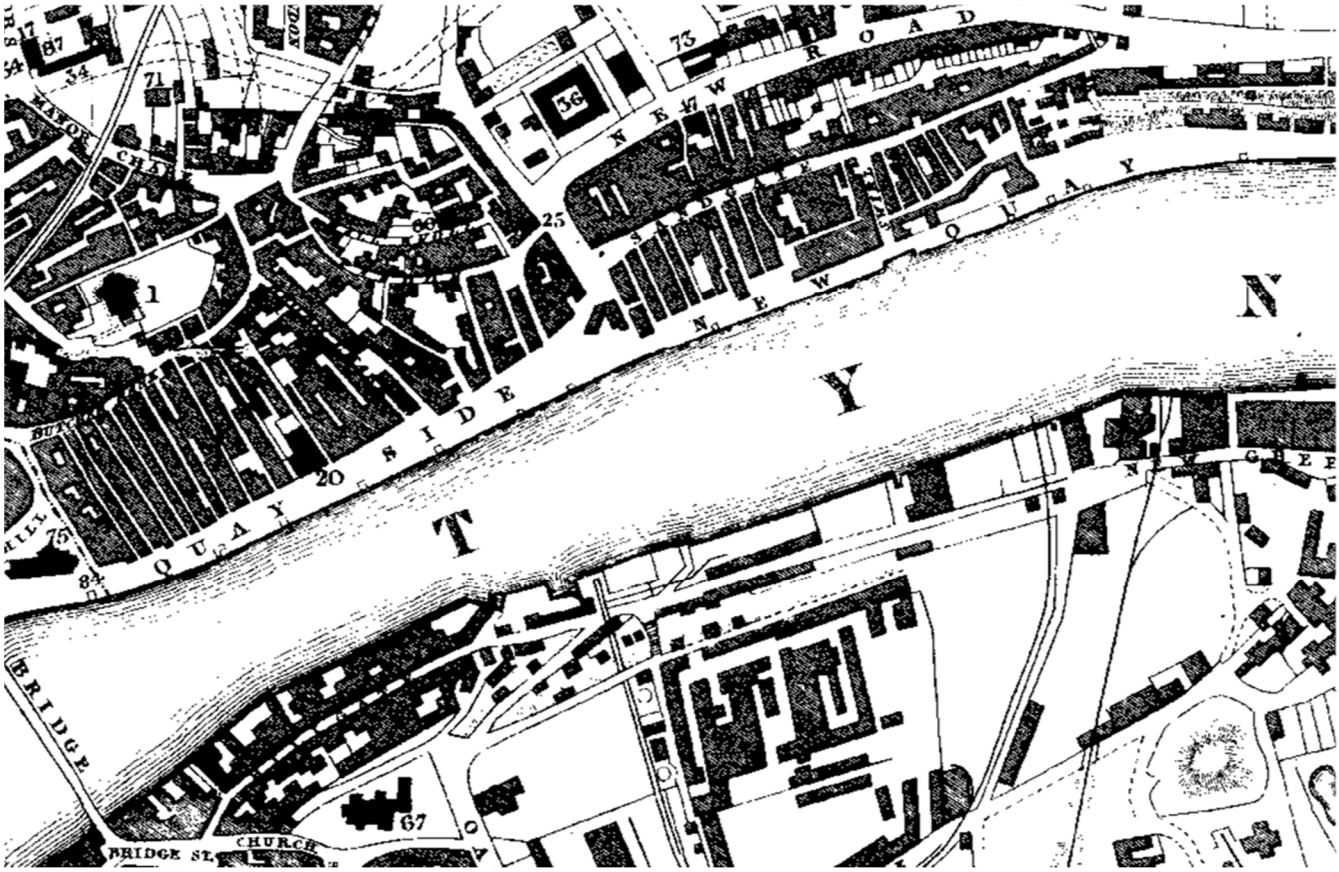
H. M'COLL, PRINTER.

68

Corven may have written these lyrics, but people of Irish heritage were still not universally popular in the north east.

Thanks largely to the expansion of the coalfield, railways, heavy engineering and shipbuilding, the population of Northumberland and Durham had more than doubled in half a century to around 695,000. Northumberland's 303,500 inhabitants included 64,200 in Tynemouth, and County Durham's 391,000 included almost 35,800 in South Shields, 48,000 in Gateshead and 70,500 in Sunderland; so over 435,000 people, 61 percent of those in the region, lived around the navigable sections of the Tyne and Wear. Around 40,000 people in County Durham had been born in Northumberland, 40,000 in Yorkshire, 7,500 in Cumberland and Westmoreland, 9,000 in Scotland, 18,000 in Ireland and 18,000 elsewhere. There were 13,000 Irish-born people in Northumberland, where over 152,000 failed to attend a place of worship and Anglican churches attracted barely 55,000. In County Durham approaching 182,000 worshippers included almost 69,000 who attended Anglican churches, but just over 9,900 out of Newcastle's population of around 87,000.

The population of Sandgate in Newcastle's All Saints parish was 5,000, but at harvest time it doubled to 10,000. The street was 370 yards long and just wide enough for two carts to pass. There were 25 *chares* (narrow alleys) either side of the road, but few of those on the north side were wider than a metre and most on the south were little wider, and it was impossible to avoid 'excrementitious matter' (raw sewage). Each chare contained eight to ten mainly two-storey houses with around eight rooms apiece and an average of around 28 people lived in each dwelling.[69] Over 7,100 Irish immigrants formed 8.1 percent of Newcastle's population and many lived in All Saints. Most were from the west of Ireland and were Catholics, while the 2,200 Irish-born people in Pipewellgate, Hillgate and Bridge Street formed 8.6 percent of Gateshead's population, and they were 'chiefly from Ulster' and Protestants.[70]



71

Some homes in All Saints parish were 'of the most filthy description, more resembling pigstyes than the dwellings of human beings', and there were several cases of fever. 'The rooms and stairs seem to be never cleaned', yet the English landlords charged 1s 3d per week for a room, and the Board of Guardians resolved that if they did not 'immediately remedy such nuisances', they 'would do it at their expense'.[72] Over 40 percent of Wall Knoll's inhabitants were Irish,[73] and the Town Mission believed that 'few places were so densely populated' as the Stockbridge, where people lived 'without God and a knowledge of the divine truth'. The 'master-evil which seemed to rule both sexes was drunkenness', while 'swearing and Sunday trading were carried on to a fearful extent'. The 'sanitary condition of the large number of Irish in Craig's Alley, Blyth's Nook, &c'., where 12 to 16 people lived in one room no larger than four metres by five, was 'productive of the worst evils', though the English residents were aware of the 'unchanging character of popery' and knew 'how insulting, earnest, and aggressive were its proceedings'.[74]

According to *The Tablet*, a Catholic newspaper, on Sunday 11 May a Primitive Methodist preacher known as 'Ranter Dick' delivered a 'No-Popery sermon' in Sandgate. Some Irish people 'commenced an attack' and the preacher 'had speedily to fly to save himself from a severe chastisement', but English locals supported him and 'a general row commenced'.[75] The *Newcastle Courant* reported events differently.

> Sandgate, at all times, has been considered the worst sink of profligacy and vice in the town; but, though occasionally the scene of public-house brawls and disorderly proceeding, yet nothing has hitherto occurred within its precincts equal to what took place on Sunday evening last. It appears for some time past large bodies of Irish labourers have been in the habit of congregating at this place, and of course have been the source of much annoyance to the better portion of the residents, who, not without some difficulty, were able to get to their homes, the street being so much obstructed by them. On the day in question whey collected as usual, and towards the afternoon a disposition of a mischievous nature was manifested by some of them, and though various rumours are abroad as to the origin of the present outbreak, yet it is pretty generally attributed to one of the Irish party tripping up the heels of a female, and on her husband attempting to protect her, he also was knocked down and ill-treated. This affray occurred between four and five o'clock; and from that period until about half past six o'clock, groups of Irishmen, from 20 to 30 in number, occupied various parts of the street, while many among them were making use of threatening imprecations on the English around. At this period P.C. 124 (Dodds) accompanied by another officer, entreated them in persuasive terms, to move on in order to clear the street, when some obeyed end others pertinaciously refused to do so. Shortly after, and without any apparent cause of provocation, about two hundred Irishmen turned out suddenly and simultaneously from different alleys and lanes, armed with large sticks, iron rods tongs, pokers, coal rakes and other offensive weapons, while several women and a number of lads from twelve to sixteen years of age, accompanied them laden with brickbats and other missiles, all of whom were hooting and bellowing in such a hideous manner, as at once startled the entire neighbourhood. One of the rioters in particular, who seemed to be the ringleader, placed himself at the head of the mob, howling and vociferating loudly, 'Och, by Jasus, we'll take Sandgate tonight, and be revenged on every English ----- in it.' Police-officer Dodds, notwithstanding that he had received the addition of other four officers, found it impossible to cope with such a formidable body and prudently withdrew his men, but on the Irish perceiving this, they attacked the officers with a shower of stones, and one of them was knocked senseless to the ground, while another was violently struck by one of the rioters with an iron bar. By the help of some shopkeepers, the wounded policemen were dragged into a house, and so escaped further injury. The rioters then finding themselves unopposed, set to work, in the most wanton and disgraceful manner to attack the windows of the houses on each side of the street, where they demolished numberless squares of glass, besides breaking window frames, shutters and doors, following up, at the same time, their reckless course by using the most daring imprecations towards the inhabitants.

More police arrived and arrested 40 or so 'rioters', some of whom 'got rather roughly handled' on the way to the police station,[76] and the *Newcastle Chronicle* acknowledged that 'poor Pat came off second-best'.[77]

The *Newcastle Guardian* reported that English boys had thrown stones at some Irishmen who had been drinking in the street. A policeman asked the Irishmen to disperse and they moved to where a man was preaching a sermon in favour of teetotalism, but he 'wisely withdrew' when he was 'surrounded by such a riotous assembly'.

> [T]here suddenly issued from the various lanes and alleys of Sandgate, large bodies of Irishmen, armed with sticks, pokers, and carving knives, and these all marched up the street. The police, who were now eight in number, entreated them to lay down their weapons, and assured them that they should be protected if any attack were made upon them. One of the officers was immediately struck with a poker, and the others were surrounded by the mob, who brandished their weapons in the air, vowing vengeance on the first man who touched them. The officers, alarmed at the sight of 200 armed men, took to their heels …

One Irishman allegedly threatened a policeman with a pistol and English people 'brutally attacked' Irish prisoners.[78]

On Monday the prisoners were taken before the mayor, a Navy captain and two gentlemen JPs, who fined two men £2, or a month in prison, and two others 10s, or 14 days, for taking part in the 'riot'. Six men charged instructed their solicitor to say that someone 'preaching against the catholic religion' had caused the 'row', but a woman testified that he 'never mentioned anything about the Roman Catholic religion' and 'all he said was good and peaceable'. The bench fined two more men 10s, or 14 days in prison, and two others £1, or one month. Four more men were charged with being 'concerned in the disturbance' and witnesses 'picked out Richard Burke as being the ring-leader'. The bench discharged one man, and fined another 10s, or seven days in prison, and fined Burke and a namesake of his £1 each, or one month in jail. They fined another man 10s, or seven days in jail, another £2, or one month, but discharged a third. They remanded a man charged with assaulting a boy, because the victim's injuries prevented him from attending. Three men, two with 'their heads wrapped up in bandages', and one with his left eye 'frightfully disfigured' and 'closed up', were fined 10s, or ten days in prison, and another had to pay 10s or serve seven days. An Irish lodging-house keeper was fined £5, or one month's hard labour, for 'exciting the mob, throwing stones, and presenting a pistol at a police officer', but an English publican 'charged with presenting a pistol from his house window' claimed he had done so to 'protect his house' and was discharged, and the JPs 'admonished and discharged' 18 others.[79]

Three years earlier J.P. Robson had argued that Newcastle had changed for the worse 'since the paddies came here'. They shared their 'pig-sties' with pigs and 'cuddies' (donkeys) and resembled the 'mawks' (maggots) in their food.[80] In February 1851 the *Newcastle Journal* had reported that Miss Sophia Grainger's wedding was 'the most dashing affair of the kind that has taken place in this town for some years' and 'called forth … commemorative and gratulatory stanzas from the gifted pen of our respected townsman, Mr. J. P. Robson'. *Lines inscribed to Richard Grainger, Esq. On the Marriage, of his Fourth Daughter, Sophia, with Alexander Smith, Esq. M.D. of 37th Regiment*, exhorted the bride to look forward to her 'Indian home of promised rest'.[81] In spring the Robsons lived at 12 Manors, between a hairdresser's family and a pauper widow. Robson was 42 and described himself as an 'Orther' of 'Poetry and Belles Letters'. Isabella was 39, while 12-year-old John Bergna was a 'Scholar' and so was ten-year-old Robert William. Their father was a Catholic Englishman with at least one Scots grandparent, but after the Sandgate 'riot' he set a song to a tune often associated with racist lyrics. He may have circulated his verses in manuscript, but he evidently did not publish them for around two years, presumably for fear of reprisals, even though the names were probably fictitious.

HORRID WAR I' SANGEYT.

AIR.—"King of the Cannibal Islands."

There's nowt se bad, aw've heerd folks say,
As let daft preechers her thor way;
An' weil 'twas proved the other day,
Biv the horrid war o' Sandgeyt.
Yence Ranter Dick preeched frev a chair,
While singin' oot wiv cuddy's blair,
An' gi'en the pope a canny share,
Ov hell fire comfort aw declare,
When Paddy Flynn set up a howl,
An' Squintin' Dick an' Ted McCowl,
Meyd preest an' buik an' stull ti rowl,
I' the muck an' clarts i' Sangeyt.

Nan Dodds an' me wiv Metler Jack,
Was stannin' biv the ranter's back,
Says aw, ye thun'rin Irish pack,
Dor ye start yor gam i Sandgeyt?
Then wi' maw neeve aw shuts a blaw,
An' levels Dan an' Cowley law,
Wor Jack pick'd up the preecher's craw,
An' teld him not geyn popes ti jaw,
An' noo the bonny gam begun,
The pats frev oot thor hooses run
They poored biv thoosans fra the Sun,
To start the war i' Sangeyt!

They cam frev a' the stinkin' howls,
Like harrin—damn—they cam iv showls,
Wiv buzzum shanks an' aud bed powls—
Steyus flew like shot i' Sangeyt!
The pollis cam wiv thor black sticks,
But some gat felled biv greet half-bricks—
Then rowlin-pins an' shafts ov picks,
Was brought to de the the natives' tricks;
The paddies screemed till a' was blue—
Down wid the English thaves! hurroo!
Let's slay the Saxon haythins noo—
An' we'll be kings ov Sangeyt?

The cam fra Quin's an' Simpson's tee,
Fra Ford's, an' hooses lang the Kee;
Fra Pipergeyt an' Mill Entree—
Tiv this horrid war o' Sangeyt.
The Irish force was fairly quashed—
When on the Keeside porters dashed,
The tongs went up—bed-powls were smashed,
An' heeds were brok' an' winders crashed!
Then brave keel-laddies tuik thor turn—
Wiv Smiths an' potters fra the Burn;
They cut the paddies up, like corn,
An' laid them law iv Sangeyt.

The sweeps noo teemed wiv sic a rush,
The paddies flew afore the brush—
Aud Fish's heroes meyd a push,
An' blacked the boys iv Sangeyt.
Bill Johnson's crew an' Clarks was there;
An' Knight an' Lumley's pack fowt sair;
Jim Frames booled fra the Cassel Square,
Wiv Blower's blacks an' monny mair;
The landlords joined the root an' row,
Bob Carr gat help frev Barley Mow;
Moor put his Steam Boat lads i' tow,
An' all was war i, Sangeyt!

Nell prood clicked up her three foot stull,
An' open laid Pat Dermot's skull;
An' Dog-turd Peg whorled roond her sheul
An' splet some heeds i' Sangeyt.
Fat Oyster Bet an' Teytie Sall
Gat three greet navvies 'geyn the wall;
Bet prick'd them wiv a cobbler's awl;
Peg powsed their jaws wiv monny a pall
An' when the pats was fairly deun,
Wor Sally for the pollis run,
An' tiv the station all was teun,
For raisin' war i' Sangeyt.

The pollis had geyn doon wi' fear,
If cheps like uz had not been near;
Man, Keyside blood's se full o' beer,
We'd fight the world i' Sangeyt.
Wor Jack an' me tiv Manors tuik,
Just fifteen pats biv Scott's awn buik,
We seized them biv a grapplin, huik,
An' caged them for some mair ti luik,
O' Monday morn aw fand a' sair,
When aw was called afore the mayer,
Aw swore 'twas a' that ranter's prayer,
That started war i' Sangeyt.
To gaol the durty trash was sent,
Wiv broken skulls an' fairly spent,
They luiked like feuls an' neyn content,
Wiv raisin' war i' Sangeyt.
Noo as they're free aw say ageyn,
Pats better let us lads aleyn,
Newcassel bluid can rule the main,
Aye, owther seas or cocks, that's plain!
So let's away tiv Balmbra's hoose,
They say the singin' gans on croose,
An' when for neeves we hae a use,
We'll conquer all iv Sangeyt.

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J. P. Robson.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

82

In June three local men attacked some Irishmen in Sandgate, including one who was peaceably eating his supper at home, and they were fined £1 or a month in prison.[83] Robson's *Summer Excursions in the North of England* rejoiced that modern 'incarceration is rendered many degrees more akin to our common humanity' than Warkworth Castle's dungeon, but he did not mention his personal experience.[84]

Newcastle's 'respectable' entertainers sometimes performed in the countryside. The previous January after about 150 people had had an 'excellent tea' in Bywell Inn, to raise funds to support the local choir, John Sessford and a Mr Robson (probably not J.P.) entertained them with 'popular songs and duettos'.[85] *The Era* noted that The Shades Saloon, the 'old establishment' in Newcastle, had had 'very crowded audiences' for a company that included female 'Roman and Grecian Statues', a female ballad singer and a 'full and effective' orchestra. In February the Shades Saloon had 'bumper houses'. William Campbell's enlarged venue in North Shields was also successful and the company included 'the Giant Nigger, Mr. Greaves', who was well over two metres tall. A week later Whitfield engaged Mr. J Murray, who 'acts the Nigger very creditably, and his performance on five tambourines at one time is greatly applauded' by 'bumper houses'. In March Mr. Booth, the Clog Dancer and manager of Hall's Royal Casino, 'continues to delight his audiences by his dancing and quiet style of singing'.[86]

Roger Whitfield, a 46-year-old 'Innkeeper', lived in Manor Street, All Saints, with Ann Bagnall, a 66-year-old widow and 'Dom[estic] Houskeeper' born in Newcastle, and two 'Inn Servants', 17-year-old Jane Roull, born in Newcastle, and 18-year-old Margaret Kelley, born in Carlisle. At 3 and 4 Cloth Market, 37-year-old John Balmbra and his 35-year-old wife, Isabella, born in Newcastle, employed Ann Braban, an 18-year-old cook from Byker Hill, and Mary Winsley, an 18-year-old 'House Maid' from Woolwich, while Mary Ann Gibbons, a 30-year-old married 'Vocalist', was a 'Visitor' from London. William Hall, a 42-year-old 'Publican' born in Felton, Northumberland, lived in Goat Inn Yard, Cloth Market, with 42-year-old Elizabeth, born in Hexham, and their 16-year-old twins, born in Newcastle. William Thompson, a 28-year-old 'Traveller', was a 'Visitor' at the Turf Hotel in Collingwood Street. 'William Campble', a 35-year-old 'Publican', and his 35-year-old wife Mary, orginally Miss Rosendale from Selby, lived in Bedford Street, North Shields, with two sons and one daughter, all under seven, Mary's 62-year-old widowed mother Jane, and Ann McGee, a 20-year-old 'Domestic Serv[ant]' from Selby. In April Whitfield engaged Sessford, 'a pianist and vocalist of ability', to perform to 'respectable audiences' at The Shades, which was 'doing tolerably brisk business;' but by May Mr M. Wilson, 'an excellent pianist, and of some celebrity as a composer, from Glasgow' was engaged there, and 'Mr. W. Brown, the Nigger Melodist', was 'a great favourite'. In July, when Mr J. Costello was at The Shades, business was good,[87] but the temperance lobby was gaining strength.

James Rewcastle, a 48-year-old 'Master Printer' born in Tynemouth, employed one boy and lived in Oyster Shell Lane, off Westgate. Mary, his Newcastle-born wife, was 55. Their 16-year-old daughter was a 'Milliner' and their two-year-old granddaughter lived with them. That summer, as Secretary of Newcastle Temperance Society, Rewcastle condemned the Town Moor races for drunkenness, gambling and the 'shameful profanation of the Sabbath', and the magistrates supported him. Robert 'Spoore', the landlord of a beer-house in East Street, Gateshead, who was probably the fiddle player Bobby Spoor, was fined 10s with 7s 6d costs for 'having his house open for the sale of beer on Sunday morning'.

In September a 'soiree' in support of Wylam Reading Room took place in a 'spacious marquee' in a field near the village, 'the free use which was granted by John Clay, Esq., mayor of South Shields, who also presented £1 to the society'. About 400 people heard Wylam Band play 'several of the most popular airs', while 'the evening's entertainments were varied with speeches, songs, and instrumental music', and 'Mr Sessford of Newcastle' sang 'several excellent songs'.[88] In October *The Era* noted that the Royal Casino was 'a favourite resort of amusement' in Newcastle on account of its 'Groupings of Living Models from the classic authors', while a 'comic singer' was the major attraction at the Wheat Sheaf. By November Balmbra had a 'very strong company, including Sessford, and had invested a considerable amount of capital in 'very extensive alterations' so that his venue would accommodate 2,000 people.[89] Hall's Goat Inn had a parlour, spirit bar, tap room, kitchen and brewery downstairs, and the Royal Casino was a large room upstairs with a 'commodious Bar' and associated 'dressing and anti Rooms'. Early in December the Inn and its 'Large and Well-Known MUSICAL CASINO' was available to let and 'entered immediately', so interested parties should 'apply at the Bar',[90] but days later they were to apply to Mr John Pigg at the Albert Brewery in the Cattle Market.[91] Late that month Sessford sang in a Grand Concert of English Secular Music in the Assembly Rooms with the 'kind permission of Mr Balmbra'.[92] His repertoire included *Old Folks at Home*, which Stephen Foster had written for the 'blackface' New York Christy Minstrels from the perspective of 'darkeys' allegedly 'longing for de old plantation',[93] and a boy heard the song at the Wheat Sheaf.

> When I first entered it as a lad of 15 in search of a friend, I was delighted with the singing of 'Way down upon the Swanny River,' then newly written, and I not infrequently revisited the hall. Sessford was chairman and sang many a charming song, and amongst others a farewell to emigrants, 'God speed ye all ye hopeful Band', and a somewhat sad invitation to 'Come, Come with me to the Old Kirkyard.' I have heard some excellent singing there – 'Hail Smiling Morn', and others.

He recalled, probably mistakenly, that the pianist was 'poor Bob Sessford',[94] not John.

In March 1852 *The Era* reported that Balmbra's Music Saloon in Newcastle 'fills to overflow each evening' thanks to a female 'sentimental and characteristic vocalist' and the black singers Ceda, Johnson and Lawrence. By April John O'Gilvie from Aberdeen had redecorated Balmbra's 'ROYAL PROMENADE CONCERT ROOM'.[95] In June Sessford sang in a Harmonic Society concert of Händel's *Messiah* and the *Newcastle Guardian* noted that he had 'a fine voice and sings well, but his pronunciation might be improved'.[96] William Campbell announced that his 'Double Tent' would be at the back of the Grandstand at the Newcastle Town Moor races and while admission to the 'Music Saloon' and its 20 performers would be free, there was an entrance fee for the bar, but it would sell both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

NEWCASTLE RACES.
IMPORTANT NOTICE TO THE PLEASURE-SEEKING PUBLIC.

WM. CAMPBELL, Proprietor of the NORTHUMBERLAND HOTEL MUSIC SALOON, NORTH SHIELDS, will ERECT his DOUBLE TENT and GRAND STAND opposite the DISTANCE POST, which is allowed to be the best Sight on the Course.

A Company of TWENTY PERFORMERS has been engaged for the Occasion.

To the Music Saloon, *Admission free.*

The following liberal Scale of Charges will be adopted for the STAND :—Day Tickets, 1s. each; Northumberland Plate, 6d.; all other Races 3d. each.

P.S. The Saloon at the back of the Stand will be fitted up with every Degree of Comfort, the Prices for Refreshments being the same as at his own Residence, namely :—

Wines	6d. per Glass.
Spirits	4d. do.
Ale and Stout	4d. per Pint.
Cordials	4d. per Glass.
Soda Water and Lemonade..	4d. per Bottle.

W. C. presumes that the Name of the Gentleman who has contracted to erect the Stand will be a sufficient Guarantee for the Safety of the Public, namely, Mr Reed, of Newcastle; the same Gentleman who erected Cook's Circus.

Observe—No. 12 STAND, CAMPBELL, NORTH SHIELDS. 97

Two days later Balmbra announced in *The Era* that he would also ave a tent on the Town moor for the races.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE RACES.—ROYAL PROMENADE CONCERT ROOM, WHEATSHEAF INN, 3 and 4, CLOTH MARKET, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. PROPRIETOR, MR. JOHN BALMBRA, who will have his large and elegantly fitted up TENT on the TOWN MOOR, at Newcastle-on-Tyne Races, as usual, well stocked with all the necessary comforts required for the inward man, and kindly solicits the patronage of his numerous friends and the public in general. And after the Races, each day, his Royal Promenade Concert Room will be found the NE PLUS ULTRA of MORAL, INSTRUCTIVE, and RATIONAL AMUSEMENT, consisting of SONGS, DUETS, GLEES, CHORUSES, and TERPSICHOREAN EXERCISES, BALLETS D'ACTION, &c., by the most talented Company of Artistes ever concentrated in one establishment. The ROOM and SCENERY have been greatly enlarged and newly decorated by that talented Artist, Mr. JOHN O'GILVIE, from Aberdeen, and assistants; and for beauty of decorations and comfort is not equalled by any other public place of amusement. In fact, neither time nor expense has been spared to make this place worthy the large patronage of a liberal and discerning public.

N.B.—First-class Professionals required; no others will be treated with. 98

The increasingly active concert hall business encouraged printers to publish song lyrics.

James Selkirk had a press at 74 Grey Street in Newcastle and in spring 1851 he had sent the 24-page *Selkirk's Songs & Ballads for the People No. 1* to the bibliophile Robert White. Selkirk wanted to include 'correct and carefully-printed ballads' in a series 'Sold by all Booksellers', and his 'principal motive' was to make sure the penny numbers would sell 'among the working classes', but he 'printed a few at twopence each for collectors'. In summer he sent White *No. 2*, which noted that Selkirk's 'Wholesale Agent in Carlisle was Mr James Arthur, Bookseller, Stationer and Newsagent' at the 'General Railway Station'. *No. 5* was 'so arranged as to cut off the title and contents before binding the Volume' and when 'twelve Numbers are bound, a title-page and a complete alphabetical index will be published'. 'All communications concerning Songs for this publication must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, as a guarantee of their originality and of their not having been published before'. Early in 1852 *No. 7* was available on 'Extra Fine paper' for twopence, and in summer *No. 11* included *Tyne Lads Forever*, an 'original local song (copyright) by Edward Corven, and now first printed and published)'.

Aw 's a jolly young keelman's lad, sirs, a son o' coaly Tyne,
An' mony a spree a've had, sirs, wi' frien's byeth true an' kin',
Aw luive maw marrows dearly, besides aw 's fond o' beer,
And tho' oft aw 'll not see clearly, when drunk, straight hyem aw steer.
Singing, fal the dal, the dal lel lay, Tyne lads for ever, &c.

A' day we work an' sing, lads, wi' hearts sae blythe an' free,
A' discontent we fling, lads, when we 're yence on the spree;
And tho' we 're luicked on lightly, thou 'll find us true an' leal,
We 're brave, we 're bold, an' sprightly, wi' hearts that ever feel.

We smoke, we dance, an' drink, lads, an' work hard for wor breed;
We sing, we joke, an' think, lads, o' friends that 's lang gane deed;
We 've airms, we 've legs, we 've brains, lads, better than mony a king,
And tho' we ha'e nae worldly gains, we 're happy when we sing.

O, through this weary world, lads, we 'll float on wi' the tide,
Nobbit gis a canny wife, lads, an' bairns that 's a' wor pride;
Wor au'd keel on the Tyne, lads, to earn an honest pund,
Then a' wor hopes will shine, lads; we 'll niver gan agrund.

To be the king ov England aw wadn't giv a scuddock,
Aw 'd suinner leeve on breed an' cheese, an' smoke down i' wor huddock;
Wi' maw marrows close aside us, thor funny sang an' cheer,
Thou 'll find nowt wrang betide us, gis lots o' wark an' beer.

Noo as for Mrs. Pollysticks fightin' wi' Jacky Russell,
It 's nowt to me, when they tyke the gee they can myek a royal bussel;
For aw 'll tyek me beer an' smoke, lads, but while to life aw cling,
Aw 'll stick up for wor Tyneside folks, an' while aw 've breeth aw 'll sing.
Fal the dal, &c. 99

The queen ('Mrs Pollysticks') disliked John Russell the Foreign Secretary,[100] but the tune *Susan of the Valley* has not been traced.

Billy Thompson was engaged at the Wheat Sheaf, but was charged with a robbery in the Black Swan.[101] Francis Calhoun had left Balmbra's at 5.30am, gone to the public house in Westgate and fallen asleep, but woke up when he felt somebody '"tugging" his gold chain through a button-hole in his waistcoat'. He found the chain in Thompson's hand and discovered that £13 had been stolen. William Hunter testified that Thompson had broken the chain and handed the watch to an accomplice, who left. Hunter trod on Calhoun's toes to wake him up, but several of Thompson's 'companions' were present and he was afraid to say anything. The case was adjourned to the quarter sessions, where Thompson was sentenced to six months in prison.

John Taylor, a brewer with an office in High Friar Street, advertised The Shades to let, since Whitfield had moved to the Glengarry Arms, opposite the steam boat wharf and the New Quay, where he would supply new and old customers with chops, steaks, tea, coffee, ales, liquors and wines 'on a reasonable Scale of Charges', and provide well-aired beds.[102] *The Era* noted that 'Balmbra's Music Hall' was an 'extensive establishment', and in August the proprietor of 'Balmbra's Promenade Concert Hall' was being 'well repaid for the great amount of capital he has laid out' by 'crowded audiences who nightly assemble' to see and hear John Sessford, Charles Easthope, James Spiers, a veteran of Billy Purvis's show, and others.[103]

Newcastle Bankruptcy Court had declared M'Coll insolvent and he was completely 'brought down by unavoidable losses and misfortunes'.[104] That summer he voted for Robert Ingham, the successful Whig candidate in the parliamentary election, while the printer Robert Dobby voted for the defeated Tory, Henry Liddell. M'Coll was about to leave for Australia, and the Town Council let him make arrangements with a friend to do their printing on the same terms. In September M'Coll and his family boarded the *Emigrant* at Sunderland and took 40 boxes of type and two presses, since he intended becoming a printer in Geelong,[105] whose population was growing rapidly after gold was discovered in nearby Ballarat.

In Newcastle James Moore, a butcher, was charged with violently assaulting Whitfield at the Britannia Arms on the New Quay.[106] Whitfield instructed his barrister to get the case 'sent to the Sessions'. In September he described how Moore arrived near midnight and 'called for a half-pint of stout', but 'refused drinking it, because it was not in a pewter pot'.

> The stout was accordingly transferred to a pewter pot, but he still refused taking it, and called for a glass of gin. On this the complainant … requested the prisoner to leave his house. Some words were then interchanged, and the prisoner becoming insolent, the complainant seized him by the collar, and attempted to put him to the door. A scuffle ensued, when the complainant was thrown down, and while lying, the prisoner lifted him up by the legs and threw him down again, and then afterwards took up the fender to strike him, but it was taken from him. The complainant on getting released from the prisoner, was proceeding to the bar, when the latter followed, struck him severely over the eye, and seized the poker, when the complainant again closed with him for self-protection, but the prisoner being too strong for him, threw him again, and endeavoured to gouge out one of his eyes. He then became weak and insensible, and the police fortunately coming in, took the prisoner into custody. The complainant since then had been attended by Mr Newton, surgeon, who stated that he had a rib broken, and was so seriously injured as to place his life for some time in jeopardy.

In October Moore was found guilty of common assault, paid a £10 fine and went free.[107]

Billy Thompson evidently got time off for good behaviour and advertised that the Bee-Hive Music Saloon at Mill-Dam Bank in South Shields would be 'Open every Evening at 6 o'clock, with a Talented Company' and no entrance charge'. 'Refreshments of First Quality and Moderate rates. Upper Boxes and Fitted Up in an elegant style for Select Parties. FRESH OYSTERS THRRE TIMES A WEEK. Families Supplied'. By November the Bee-Hive was open 'every lawful evening'. 'W.T. ever grateful for the Favours already bestowed on him, since he first opened his Popular place of Amusement, respectfully intimates to the Public generally, that the Refreshments served, and the Entertainment generally, still continue to merit public approval'. The company included Mr. J. Millicent, the 'renowned Juba Dancer', Mrs. Booth, the 'Favourite Comic and Sentimental vocalist', Miss M. Thompson, the 'Popular Ballad and Bravura Singer', Misses M. and A. Millicent, the 'Fascinating Danseuses', Mr. J. Booth, the 'Negro Vocalist and Clog Dancer', Mr. W. Thompson, the 'delineator of the Songs of the Tyne', and Mr. J. Spiers, the 'well-known Comic Singer'. Mr Sanderson led the 'full and efficient' orchestra' and the pianist was Mr Smith.[108] An 'excessively crammed house showed their appreciation' for Spiers before he left for an engagement in Manchester.[109]

James 'Hile', a '39'-year-old 'Musician' and 37-year-old Sarah lived in the Close, Newcastle, in 1851, but late in 1852 Hill died from tuberculosis in Westmoreland Lane, Westgate, and his age was recorded as 42. Ellen Bolam, who was present at his death, put her cross on the certificate,[110] and Hill was buried in St. Anne's churchyard.[111] Ned Corven set *Canny Jimmy Hill* to the tune he knew as *Of a' The Girls* from the first line of Henry Carey's early 18th *Sally in Our Alley*.

All ye who love an honest soul, brim-high your glasses fill,
And as your fleeting moments roll, let's drink to Jimmy Hill;
To canny Jimmy, bonny Jimmy—he play'd the fiddle weel,
But noo his bonny strains are o'er, he's in the land o' leal.

Oh! had ye heard his merry reels that care aloof dispels;
Or had ye seen his bonny bow when gliding o'er "Blue Bells;"
Enchanting sounds crept round each heart, all worldly cares lay still,
And friendship reigned 'midst tears and smiles, when listening Jimmy Hill.

Then drink to his memory while ye think all will be hushed at last,
For as departing sounds retreat, life mingles with the past;
And, O! when in this weary world his last fond throb did cease,
I hope his soul was borne to rest and everlasting peace. [112]

These lyrics were evidently unpublished for well over a year, but for Corven and others, Hill's death was the end of an era.

5. The Royal Olympic Concert Hall

Early in 1853 John Balmbra, William Campbell and William Thompson advertised in the local directory.

NORTHUMBERLAND HOTEL

MUSIC SALOON,

Bedford Street, North Shields.

PROPRIETOR AND MANAGER, MR. CAMPBELL.

Open every lawful evening with a talented company of
INSTRUMENTALISTS, VOCALISTS, DANCERS, &c.
ADMISSION FREE.
Wines, Spirits, Ales, Cordials, Drinks, &c., of the best Quality.

BEE HIVE MUSIC SALOON,

Mill Dam Bank, South Shields.

WILLIAM THOMPSON, PROPRIETOR.

☞ Open every evening at half-past 6 o'clock, with a **talented company.** The upper-boxes are fitted-up in elegant style for the convenience of select parties.
No Charge for Admission.—Refreshments of first-rate Quality.

[1]

In February the Wheat Sheaf's 'varied and highly amusing' company included John Sessford and J. Booth, who had a house 'full to overflowing' for his benefit, but the former jailbird Thompson complained to *The Era* about 'criminal' performers.

Sir,—As the columns of your valuable paper are ever open to the exposure of flagrant abuse or dishonest practices, whether by manager or performer, I feel little apology will be necessary for calling your attention to an existing evil of great magnitude and serious consequences to numbers who, like myself, are proprietors and managers of concert rooms. Independent of expense, it requires no common degree of fortitude and perseverance to establish, on a respectable footing, a place of entertainment, suited to the wants and wishes of a community. Local and even personal prejudices have to be overcome, and to silence the ever ready voice of *cant*, the most stringent regulations as regard propriety of conduct, timely hours, &c., have to be rigidly enforced. All this the proprietory may effect, but now comes the most serious part of the evil, an evil which requires an immediate check, if the music saloon is to remain a place of rational amusement to the public; it is a fact, unfortunately too well established, that a host of ignorant pretenders have thrust themselves into the profession only to disgrace it. These are utterly destitute of any talent but that which unblushing impudence confers, and hesitate not to dub themselves with the name of some lady or gentleman of undoubted reputation and merit, procure copies of their bills, and write to distant managers for situations at extravagant terms; they are, in consequence, duly announced, as the real Simon Pures, arrive, make their first appearance to an astonished public and petrified manager, who discovers, when too late, that he has been made the dupe of a miserable trickster. There is no remedy, the impostor sticks to name and engagement, and must be paid in full, though his or her first appearance should be their last, a not uncommon thing.

Another and equally criminal mode of proceeding is the unceremonious manner in which many performers, if suitable to their own convenience, relieve themselves from their engagements. There are, I am proud to say, hundreds of honourable exceptions; yet still the thing is done, and to a great extent. Take a recent case in point.—A Miss Julia B——— writes me, from Belfast, first, about Christmas last. Being wholly unknown to me, I offered her a short engagement, which was not then accepted; but, subsequently, we enter into terms, and she joins me from Manchester, on Monday, January 24th, for six weeks, being a month's engagement, and a fortnight's notice on either side. At the end of the second week, on the plea that she could not agree with some parties in the establishment, she wished to give her notice. On inquiry, I found her pretext was a mere subterfuge, without the slightest foundation in truth, but I gave her liberty to go at that moment; however, she said she would stop her time out if it suited her. Another week passed, I saw she was preparing to leave, and threatened to sue her for breach of contract, when she politely told me, I might go to a place which is commonly asserted to be rather warm in temperature, and sue there. On last Sunday, the 13th instant, she was off, bag and baggage, to a neighbouring town, Hartlepool, where her name was already in the bills. Now where, under such circumstances, is my resource? I refuse other engagements till hers terminates; I am thus injuring, it may be, honourable parties, the public who patronise me, and myself. To prosecute in such a case, and such a person, would be to chase a shadow. A landlord cannot take up his bricks and mortar and fly from his engagement; but, what security has he against the amiable eccentricities of such birds of passage as the above lady? and she is only one of the many, as I can feelingly assert from some years' experience. If a remedy could be pointed out for this species of robbery it would be a boon indeed to many of the fleeced, and to none more than your humble servant,

WILLIAM THOMPSON.

Bee Hive Saloon, South Shields, February 16.

[2]

A young showbusiness entrepreneur was undeterred.

Robert Howard was born in 1830. In the later 1840s he assisted the proprietor of the Adelphi Theatre in Sheffield, then moved to Manchester, where he lived in Dean Street, and later in Clarendon Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, where he dealt in pottery and glass, but failed to make a success of it. He moved to Higher Temple Street, Ardwick Green, and became a clerk for the Sheffield Railway Company, then moved to Moulton Street, Hulme.[3] By spring 1851 he was a beer house keeper in Furnivall Road, Sheffield, and had two servants; but in February 1853 he advertised the 'ROYAL OLYMPIC MUSIC HALL & PARISIAN PROMENADES (Late Circus Royal,) NEAR THE CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION' in the *Newcastle Guardian*. 'MR HOWARD begs respectfully to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public generally, of the opening of the above grand and matchless place of Amusement on this day, SATURDAY, 26th February, 1853, for GRAND MONSTRE CONCERTS and MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENTS'.

'Boxes, 6d; Upper Promenade, 4d; Lower Promenade, 3d; Pit and Gallery, 2d – returned in Refreshments of the very best quality'. 'No boys or improper characters admitted on any pretence whatsoever'. 'Females are admitted under the care of gentlemen'.[4] *The Era* reported that Howard had recently managed Sheffield Amphitheatre.[5]

Edward Corven sang at the Olympic on the 26th and a hosier at 64 Side,[6] Prudence Binks, reportedly had two of his songs printed next day.[7] He set *The Rise in Coals* to Sir Henry Bishop's tune for Haynes Bayly's *The Mistletoe Bough*, and dressed as an older woman on stage. *Charity Boy*, the tune he set for *The Sandgate Lass*, was 150 years old, and he dressed as a young woman who believed she was a better singer than the famous Jenny Lind and was unashamed of her sexual appetite.

THE RISE IN COALS.

Sung with great applause by EDWARD CORVEN, at the Royal Olympic Saloon and Promenade, Newcastle.

AIR.—"Mistletoe Bough."

The snaw fell doon fast, and poor folks seem'd shy,
Closed up in thor hyems as the storm pelted by;
An' they wished roond thor muiks such times suen wad pass,
For provisions had risen, and they'd saved little brass.
An' as money an' firin' was meltin' away,
Thor seemed nought but caud doups for us poor sons o' clay;
The women folks flew, to fill thor coal-holes,
To the depoe, but, hang them, they'd raised the sma' coals.

CHORUS.

O what a price for sma' coals, "hinny how!" they've raised wor sma' coals!

Gosh cap, what caud weather, wor Dickey did shoot;
Mother, fetch some coals in, wor fires gannin oot!
Some coals, lad, thou's fond, an' she gaped all amazed;
Thou maun eat less, an' drink less; the coals they've been raised.
But hinnies, that's nowt, aw's still sair best;
Coals is thruppence a betement, an' nyen for to get.
The ony bit comfort that maw aud body consoles,
They've tyen off at last, when they've raised wor sma' coals.
O what a price for sma' coals, etc.

Aw went to the depoe, aw think that's the nyem,
An' aw stood tiv aw shivered, aw really thought shayme;
Amang sic a gang had thou seen me that day,
Thou'd mabies com' suener, then aw did away;
They fought like fair deevils, aw's sure, an' far warse,
For they ken'd what it was to hev a caud a—e;
But if poor folks had sense, they'd fill a' thor holes
Wi' cinders, to spite them for raisin' sma' coals.
O what a price for sma' coals, etc.

Yen jaws aboot seets, but aw gaped wi' surprise,
To see sic a squad, wi' maw pair o' eyes;
Thor was scrushin' an' pushin', sec a mixter o' folks,
Wiv sweels, pillow-slips, cuddy cairts, an' lang pokes;
But the aud wives bang'd a' for screamin', they sings,
Canny man gis a pennorth to warm wor aud skins,"
"Aw've tetties to boil," says another, "Aw've stew,
Canny man, stick yor shull in an' gis a wee few."
O what a price for sma' coals, etc.

Some keelmen, above the bridge, aw heard a wife say,
Had been frozzen up, an' could scarce get away;
They thought a' thor fuddlin' days dune at last,
So they doon on thor knees to make up for the past;
How marrows, hawls a bully, aw've an idea some price,
We'll find Sir John Franklin, if we howk through the ice;
First let's find the North Powl, it's some way aboot,
Then get on the top ont an' give him a shoot.
Aw'll tell him they've raised wor sma coals.

They ken hoo to swindle poor folks wi' thor loads.
Pretendin' thor raised, an' that snaw stopt the rouds;
But a pitman tell'd me to stop up sic jaw,
For it nivver rained hailstones, nor snawed doon belaw.
An' he says if thou'll tayke advice fra a fuyl,
When thors a greet vast o' weather, get thaw holes a' chock full,
An' while thou's warmin' thaw shins by the fire, as the snaw
Drops doon through the loom, think o' pitmen belaw.
For they toil hard sair for sma' coals, etc.

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February 27th, 1853.

THE

SANDGATE LASS.

Sung with great applause by EDWARD CORVEN, at the Royal Olympic Saloon and Promenade, Newcastle.

TUNE.—"Charity Boy."

Aw's sweet siventeen, the lads likes me weel,
Cause aw luik se neat wiv maw bonnet an' skeel;
When aw gan ti the pant, each young man says,
Thor's not maw equal noo-a-days.
In Sandgate aw was born yen day,
When maw fether an' muther was oot folks say;
In that respectable city aw dropt maw lang claithes,
An' noo aw figers in maw bussel an' stays.

Spoken.—Aw's a stunner for

Rifum, tifum, fen an' glee,
Thou'll seldom see a lass like me;
Gosh, a happy life the chep will pass,
That marries lovely Sally, the Sandgate lass.

Aw can mayke boiled öranges, clagum, or spice,
Black bullets, scranshums, or mince tripe nice;
Aw can cry d'ye want ony fish, se smart;
Aw can mend yor breeches, or meyke a shart;
Aw can walk on maw hands, ye'll think that queer;
Aw can fight a roond, or meyke ginger beer;
Aw's a stunner ti shiffle, or run the reel;
So, what's thow think boot me an' maw skeel.

Spoken.—But a' that's nowt ti what aw can tell; bliss ye aw's a great woman for history; aw ken a' aboot Columbus, and Blind Willy, Cuckoo Jack, and a' thor greet men; aye, an' thors yen thing a knaw a vast aboot, that's Carlin Sunday; noo, aw ken the beginnin' oot, noo, aw'll tell thee, mind, an' Jenny Grunsel tell'd me, an' Jenny said it was on account o' provisions bein' see varry dear about four hundered years since, afore the invasion o' the Cassel Garth, things was sae dear then, that if a chep priced owt they used to walk him off to the kitty; fightin' men used to gan about breakin' the aud watchmen's noses, to catch the blo'k di meyke black puddin's on; gosh, the watchmen had varry little trouble in taykin' a chep up, i' thor days, a' they had ti do was ti hand a penny rowl up ti thor gobs, an' dash if they waddent dance the Hungarian polka a' the way ti the kitty. As for fashions, they wor sae scarsh that Hannah's fether's mother's grandfether's grandmother saw a regiment o' sowlgers runnin doon Dean Street wi' sic forem efter a single roasted tettie, that they went plump against the Dog Loup Stairs, an' actually shifted the Cassel Garth twenty yards farthur back; in fact, thor was nowt plentiful but water, an' folks used ti drink ti see a degree, that they used ti run about like a furdin pant, cryin' oot, who'll pump me. What bonny wark thor was. Just about that time, says Hannah, ships com ti Newcassel loaded wi' carlins, an' others loaded wi' fat an' goose drippin, an' what fryin' thor was then, that Sunday was the myest glorious Friday thors been iv'ver since, but suen as they gat thor bellies full, they gat drunk a' pelted yen another ti sic a degree that some on them's actually marked i' the fayce ti this varry day, so thou sees, that Sunday's been kept iv'ver syne. Thou sees aw ken a' almot history, but it winna fill a man's belly, so the lees a say about it the better; a' aw can say, an' wad like, is a young man that could fill maw belly, an' wark for me, hoo comfortable aw wad keep him, he should he'e lots o'—

Rifum, tifum, etc.

Aw can suim across the Tyne an' back;
Aw can grapple better than Cuckoo Jack;
Aw's just i' reet fettle, hilthy, young, an' strang;
Aw can beat Jinny Lind for singin' a sang;
Aw can jump ower a table the height o' mysel';
Sell eggs an' biscuits, reed harrin's an' yale;
So meyke up yor minds, luves, nought ti ye feel,
An' wound yor confections on one an' yor skeel.
Rifum, tifum, etc.

Aw mayde this dress, besides the bonnet,
Aw wonder what the folks thinks on it;
Besides aw's se canny, cosy, an' sweet;
Hoo canny aw'd dee for a caud winters neet;
But since ye a' here ken what aw can dee,
Thors yane thing that beats me, ye'll a' agree,
Wivoot a young man aw's a poor hordy gordy,
For aw'll nivver be yable to mayke a young Geordie.

Spoken.—Aye, what comfort, as much as iv'ver ye like ti walk intil, besides lots o'—

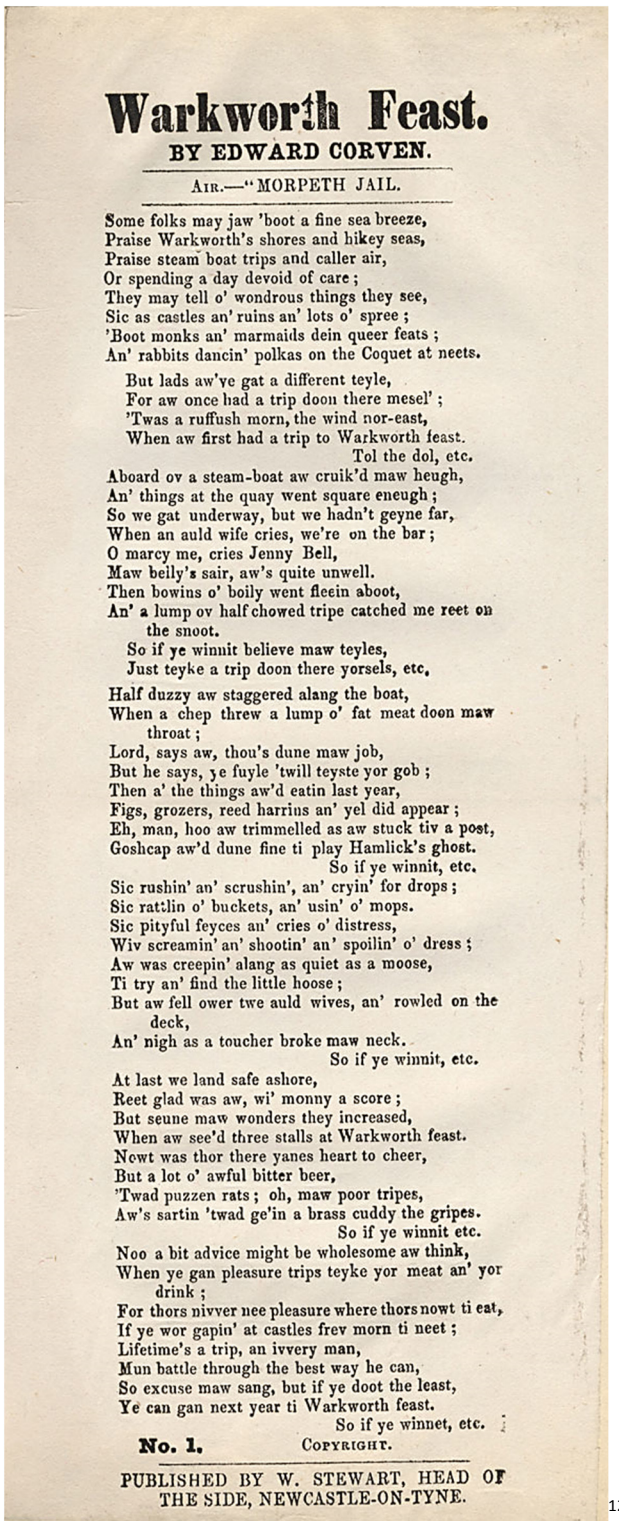
Rifum, tifum, etc.

EDWARD CORVEN. 8

Sir John Franklin's expedition to discover a North West passage in the Arctic had gone missing in 1845, but Corven also celebrated the Newcastle fiddler, Blind Willie Purvis, who had died in 1832; and a stationer spotted a business opportunity

William Stewart was born in North Shields around 1808. By 1833 he was a bookseller and stationer at 40 Bigg Market, Newcastle, and had another shop at 9 Grainger Street by 1839.[9] By 1851 the 'Hairdresser & stationer' lived in Boar's Head Yard, off Westgate street, with his wife Sarah, born in Halesowen, two sons aged 16 and 11, both described as 'Shop Boy', a seven-year-old 'Scholar' and a baby boy. By 1853 Stewart was a newsagent at 41 Side,[10] and began publishing Corven's songs.

Robert Emery's *Trip to Warkworth* had appeared in J.P. Robson's *Songs of the Bards of the Tyne* in 1849.[11] Corven's tune for his parody, *Warkworth Feast*, has not been traced, but he set *The Toon Improvement Bill* to an old air.



Warkworth Feast.

BY EDWARD CORVEN.

AIR.—"MORPETH JAIL.

Some folks may jaw 'boot a fine sea breeze,
Praise Warkworth's shores and hikey seas,
Praise steam boat trips and caller air,
Or spending a day devoid of care;
They may tell o' wondrous things they see,
Sic as castles an' ruins an' lots o' spree;
'Boot monks an' marmaids dein queer feats;
An' rabbits dancin' polkas on the Coquet at neets.

But lads aw've gat a different teyle,
For aw once had a trip doon there mesel';
'Twas a ruffush morn, the wind nor-east,
When aw first had a trip to Warkworth feast.
Tol the dol, etc.

Aboard ov a steam-boat aw cruik'd maw heugh,
An' things at the quay went square eneugh;
So we gat underway, but we hadn't geyne far,
When an auld wife cries, we're on the bar;
O marcy me, cries Jenny Bell,
Maw beily's sair, aw's quite unwell.
Then bowins o' boily went fleein aboot,
An' a lump ov half chowed tripe catched me reet on the snoot.
So if ye winnit believe maw teyles,
Just teyke a trip doon there yorsels, etc.

Half duzzy aw staggered alang the boat,
When a chep threw a lump o' fat meat doon maw throat;
Lord, says aw, thou's dune maw job,
But he says, ye fuyle 'twill teyste yor gob;
Then a' the things aw'd eatin last year,
Figs, grozers, reed harrins an' yel did appear;
Eh, man, hoo aw trimmelled as aw stuck tiv a post,
Goshcap aw'd dune fine ti play Hamlick's ghost.
So if ye winnit, etc.

Sic rushin' an' scrushin', an' cryin' for drops;
Sic rattlin o' buckets, an' usin' o' mops.
Sic pityful feyces an' cries o' distress,
Wiv screamin' an' shootin' an' spoilin' o' dress;
Aw was creepin' alang as quiet as a moose,
Ti try an' find the little hoose;
But aw fell ower twe auld wives, an' rowled on the deck,
An' nigh as a toucher broke maw neck.
So if ye winnit, etc.

At last we land safe ashore,
Reet glad was aw, wi' monny a score;
But seune maw wonders they increased,
When aw see'd three stalls at Warkworth feast.
Nowt was thor there yanes heart to cheer,
But a lot o' awful bitter beer,
'Twad puzzen rats; oh, maw poor tripes,
Aw's sartin 'twad ge'in a brass cuddy the gripes.
So if ye winnit etc.

Noo a bit advice might be wholesome aw think,
When ye gan pleasure trips teyke yor meat an' yor drink;
For thors nivver nee pleasure where thors nowt ti eat,
If ye wor gapin' at castles frev morn ti neet;
Lifetime's a trip, an ivvery man,
Mun battle through the best way he can,
So excuse maw sang, but if ye doot the least,
Ye can gan next year ti Warkworth feast.
So if ye winnet, etc.

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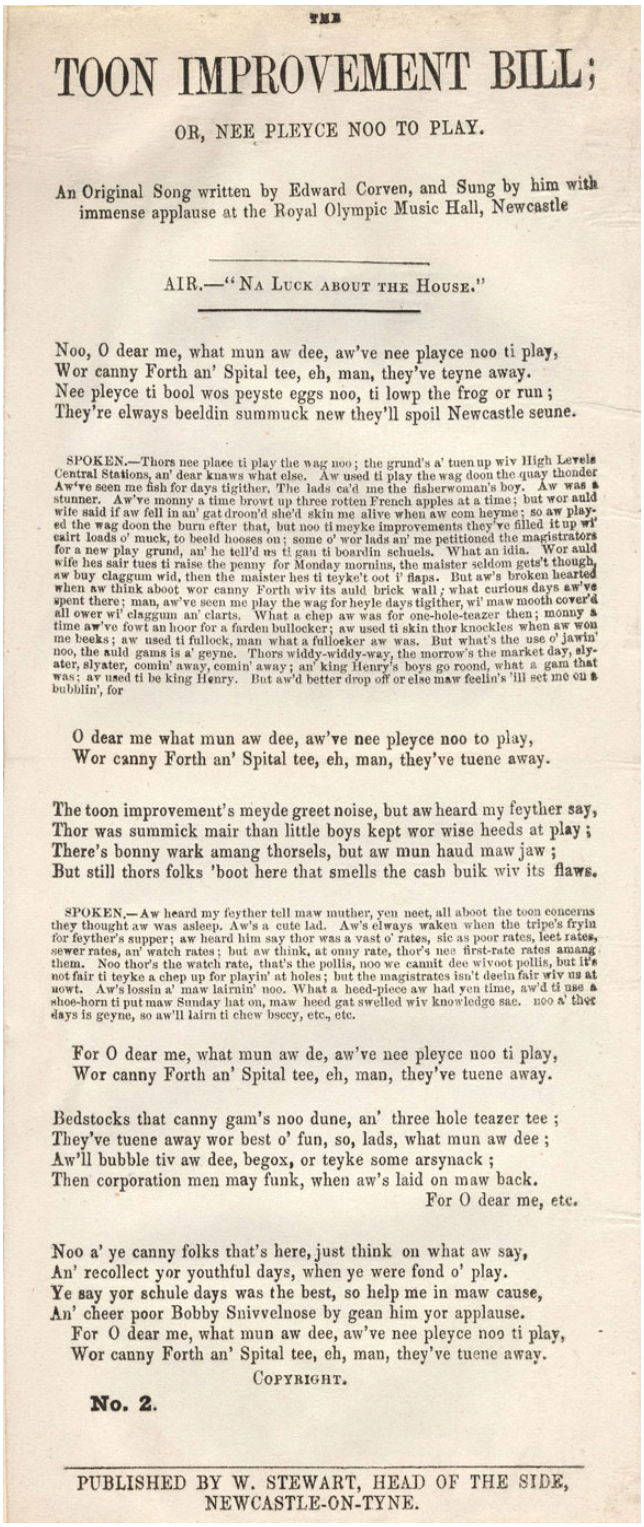
12



THE

TOON IMPROVEMENT BILL;

OR, NEE PLEYCE NOO TO PLAY.

An Original Song written by Edward Corven, and Sung by him with immense applause at the Royal Olympic Music Hall, Newcastle

AIR.—"NA LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE."

Noo, O dear me, what mun aw dee, aw've nee playce noo ti play,
Wor canny Forth an' Spital tee, eh, man, they've teyne away.
Nee pleyce ti bool wos peyste eggs noo, ti lowp the frog or run;
They're elways beeldin summuck new they'll spoil Newcastle seune.

SPOKEN.—Thors nee place ti play the wag noo; the grund's a' tuen up wiv High Levels Central Stations, an' dear knaws what else. Aw used ti play the wag doon the quay thonder Aw've seen me fish for days tigither. The lads ca'd me the fisherwoman's boy. Aw was a stunner. Aw've monny a time browt up three rotten French apples at a time; but wor auld wife said if aw fell in an' gat droon'd she'd skin me alive when aw com heyme; so aw played the wag doon the burn efter that, but noo ti meyke improvements they've filled it up wi' cairt loads o' muck, to beeld hooses on; some o' wor lads an' me petitioned the magistrators for a new play grund, an' he tell'd us ti gan ti boardin schuels. What an idia. Wor auld wife hes sair tues ti raise the penny for Monday mornins, the maister seldom gets't though, aw buy claggum wid, then the maister hes ti teyke't oot i' flaps. But aw's broken hearted when aw think aboot wor canny Forth wiv its auld brick wall; what curious days aw've spent there; man, aw've seen me play the wag for heyle days tigither, wi' maw mooth cover'd all ower wi' claggum an' clarts. What a chep aw was for one-hole-teazer then; monny a time aw've fowt an hoor for a farden bullocker; aw used ti skin thor knockles when aw won me beeks; aw used ti fullock, man what a fullocker aw was. But what's the use o' jawin' noo, the auld gams is a' geyne. Thors widdy-widdy-way, the morrow's the market day, slyater, slyater, comin' away, comin' away; an' king Henry's boys go roond, what a gam that was: aw used ti be king Henry. But aw'd better drop off or else maw feelin's 'ill set me on a bubblin', for

O dear me what mun aw dee, aw've nee pleyce noo to play,
Wor canny Forth an' Spital tee, eh, man, they've tuene away.

The toon improvement's meyde greet noise, but aw heard my feyther say,
Thor was summick mair than little boys kept wor wise heeds at play;
There's bonny wark amang thorsels, but aw mun haud maw jaw;
But still thors folks 'boot here that smells the cash buik wiv its flaws.

SPOKEN.—Aw heard my feyther tell maw muther, yen neet, all aboot the toon concerns they thought aw was asleep. Aw's a cute lad. Aw's elways waken when the tripe's fryin for feyther's supper; aw heard him say thor was a vast o' rates, sic as poor rates, leet rates, sewer rates, an' watch rates; but aw think, at onny rate, thor's nee first-rate rates amang them. Noo thor's the watch rate, that's the pollis, noo we cannit dee wivoot pollis, but it's not fair ti teyke a chep up for playin' at holes; but the magistrates isn't deein fair wiv us at nowt. Aw's lossin a' maw lairnin' noo. What a heed-piece aw had yen time, aw'd ti use a shoe-horn ti put maw Sunday hat on, maw heed gat swelled wiv knowledge sae. noo a' thet days is geyne, so aw'll lairn ti chew bseey, etc., etc.

For O dear me, what mun aw de, aw've nee pleyce noo ti play,
Wor canny Forth an' Spital tee, eh, man, they've tuene away.

Bedstocks that canny gam's noo dune, an' three hole teazer tee;
They've tuene away wor best o' fun, so, lads, what mun aw dee;
Aw'll bubble tiv aw dee, begox, or teyke some arsynack;
Then corporation men may funk, when aw's laid on maw back.
For O dear me, etc.

Noo a' ye canny folks that's here, just think on what aw say,
An' recollect yor youthful days, when ye were fond o' play.
Ye say yor schule days was the best, so help me in maw cause,
An' cheer poor Bobby Snivvelnose by gean him yor applause.
For O dear me, what mun aw dee, aw've nee pleyce noo ti play,
Wor canny Forth an' Spital tee, eh, man, they've tuene away.

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No. 2.

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Ten-year-old John Embleton Smith, the son of the schoolmaster and librarian of Newcastle Mechanics' Institute, recalled that the Olympic was a 'huge wooden structure' and 'densely crowded by an enthusiastic and demonstrative audience'. Corven was 'the "lion" of the occasion' and sang *The Toon Improvement Bill* dressed as a schoolboy and trundling a hoop. The song 'produced an extraordinary effect', because it 'appealed universally to local sympathies'.

> Ned was a tall man, about 5 feet 10 inches in height, possessing a bony, muscular frame, surmounted by a head which suggested a certain kind of rough power, and a countenance whose expression betokened infinite good nature and a rare fund of comicality. … [H]is face was pitted with smallpox; his features were rough, irregular, and certainly not classical, the nose, which is said to be an index of intellectuality, in his case being large and prominent. In speech, the tones of his sonorous baritone voice possessed the guttural burr, peculiar to Northumberland, in perfection … He was a consummate master of the patois of Tyneside, and, by his lyrical and musical talents as a performer, he made it the agent for producing some of the best effects alike of pathos and humour.

Although not in the strict sense a literary artist, he possessed sufficient knowledge of the mechanism of rhyme to construct not a few excellent local songs. There were entirely free from coarseness, indecency, or vulgarity, and possessed the true spirit of ballad poetry, going direct to the hearts of his audience, by virtue of their homeliness of sentiment, and 'that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin'. In their broader comic effects these Tyneside lyrics were simply irresistible, and Ned's singing of them invariably excited the most riotous laughter.

Ned was a competent musician, being a really expert violinist, and as a singer of local ditties, he has perhaps never been equalled in our district. Moreover, he was an excellent actor, and on the stage, by his marvellous bodily activity, the mobility of his features, and his apparently exhaustless fund of comicality, he kept his audience in a perpetual titter.[13]

The 'immense applause' came from those who identified with 'us', not 'them', and knew 'nee first-rates' in the Corporation.

Stewart's No. 3. and No. 4., *The Sandgate Lass* and *The Rise and Coals*, were almost identical to their first printing, and Corven reused a tune for *The Pitman and the Kippered Herrin'*. His 'pitman' narrator knew about the 'queer jokes' that townspeople told about pit village people, but they could discipline a selfish chapel-goer by giving him a laxative. Corven's tune for *Asstrilly* was associated with lyrics about a London costermonger who promised to be true to his sweetheart for 'a twelvemonth and a day', though she had been sentenced to seven year's transportation for theft.

THE

PITMAN

AND THE

KIPPERED HERRIN'.

An Original Song, by EDWARD CORVEN.

Air.—"Derry Down."

'Boot pitmen an' keelmen thou's heard some queer jokes,
What wi' blunders, misteykes, an, thor queer funny spokes;
But when we get a drop beer we're a' full o' glee,
Gosh, we meyke monny a blunder when we gan on the spree.
Singin', fal dal lal the dal le.

Noo, aw'll tell ye a trick aw yence played on Jim Farren,
That yen day bought a cask o' the best kippered harrin',
Ti eat tiv his coffee, his tetties an' breed,
Detarmined a' winter ti hev a cheep feed.
Fal dal, etc.

He brought some greet big uns yen neet doon the pit,
An' he wadn't let yen doon belaw teyste a bit;
So a pennorth ov jallap we pat iv his bottle,
An', lads, hoo we laughed as it went doon his throttle.
Fal lal, etc.

He hewed half an hour tiv his belly did ache,
Then he put doon his hands ti haud on the brake,
Cryen oot, Geordie Cairns, run away, thou's maw cousin,
An' fetch me a doctor, for aw've swallowed some puzzen.
Fal lal, etc.

Noo, the bit trapper laddies, wey, they laughed fit ti burst,
An' tell'd him 'twas jallap meyde his bowels bad at furst
But he says haud yor jaws, give ower yor leein;
Aw's speechless a' ready aw's sartin aws deein'.
Fal lal, etc.

Aw's deein. aw's deein, gox, aw's deein, Geordie Cairns;
Purtect, when aw's geyne, me bit wife an' maw bairns;
Teyke a' maw pit claes, come, draw thaw lug near,
An' hear maw last words, for aw've supped a' maw beer.
Fal lal etc.

Tell wor keeker, aw died wiv a pain i' the bowels,
Caused wi' eatin some harrens aw bowt frae Jack Snewels;
Tell wor preacher next meetin ti pray for maw soul;
Tell wor owners an' viewers aw'll howk nee mair coal.
Fal lal, etc.

Tell aud Jack the Deevil that leeves doon the Dean,
When aw gan doon belaw, aw'll most likely see him;
Tell aud squintin Jinny she's nae 'cashin ti fear,
For iv aw get a het borth, aw'll still teyke sma' beer.
Fal lal, etc.

Teyke maw picks tiv aud lumpy, hinny, tell him aw's gyene
A' com ti maw funeral wi' black cloaks ivvery yen;
Teyke maw grandfether's watch, keep that for thawsel';
Aw's gannin', ta, ta, Geordie, aw've nee mair ti tell.
Fal lal, etc.

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ASTRILLY,

OR THE

PITMAN'S FAREWELL.

An Original Local Song by EDWARD CORVEN.

AIR.—"All Round My Hat."

Noo marrows, aw's gawn to leave ye, an' sair, sair 'twill grieve me,
To leave wor canny Tyneside shores, where aw've had mony a spree;
Tho' its sair a geyn maw liken, tiv Asstrilly aw'll gan hykein,
For maisters keeps us striken so what mon a pitman de.

Aw, mind the time when collier lads, could howk for goold at heym, man;
Dash, aw mind the mind the time when collier lads could spend a pund each pay;
But noo the times thor queer, man, we've nowther sangs nor cheer, man;
When we cannot raise wor beer, man, it's time to gan away.

Greet men may de a vast, man, but wor fine times thor past, man;
Gosh, aw wadent leave wor canny toon, but aw's forced to gan away;
So awl meyke nae mair emotion. but cross the salt sea ocean,
Where aw've a kind o' notion if a howk awl get good pay.

Awl bid fareweel to pitwark, an' howk for lumps o' goold, man;
Gosh cap awl suen be rich, aw've vary little fear;
So awl bid fareweel to mammy, an' maw sweetheart o' the lammy;
Its weel knawn aw's nae hammy,
Spoken.—Aw pay'd Geordie Hall in four meetin's
So tiv Asstrally lads awl steer.

SPOKEN.—Its ne use stoppin' here, aw mon gan to Asstrilly. Still aw's kind o' fisid when a come to think aboot being sea-sick an' sailin' ower places where thor's nae bottom, noo, iv the sea was to run oot there, an' all hands be lost, what, o'lord, what a nibble aw'd be for a shork. An' thors Geordie Hall te, aw've conswaded him to gan awl aw can, he'd meyke a fortin' oot there i' nae time. He's sic a man for yarbs te, works on a' be nator. He can stuff bird cages an' canaries wiv ony man i' Northumberland. Thou should see his terrior bitch; she's a fair hare for rabbits—sic a hunter. Geordie's a greet polytickshinist as weel; he says he'd suener hev a reed herrin' at heyme, then beef steykes at Asstrally. Aw say what a greet stabberin cull. Thors nought 'ill stop me frae gannin; what odds if aw is drowned three or four times as lang as a' get there seyfe.
So maw marrows aw's gan, etc.

O fare ye weel ye happy scenes, where youthful days aw've spent, man;
Fare ye weel. for better times, 'boot here thor'll niver be;
So aw minnet be a gouk, man, but for goold as gan an' howk man;
Tho' maw boily aw may bouk man, aw'l soon skim o'er the sea.
So marrows aw's gan, etc.

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Corven sympathised with pitmen whose 'maisters' provoked strikes and so were lured by the prospect of digging gold in Australia, but his narrator sends himself up by acknowledging that he might drown three or four times on the way.

The tune of the melodramatic *The Ship on Fire* had been published in the USA. The narrator of *The Keel on Fire* was a 'keelman', and Corven may have dressed as one to sing it. Collectivism defeated individualism. Corven satirised individualism in *The Stage Struck Keelman*, which he set to a 200-year-old tune also known as *The Rakes of Stony Batter*. The 'Sandgate Spooter' knew about the famous actor, Charles Kean, the 25-minute Shakespeare plays and the melodramas performed by Purvis's company. He also knew about squashed bed bugs, but reserved his venom for a policeman who was ready to pawn his uniform to get his hands on his sweetheart's body and her three months' wages.

THE KEEL ON FIRE.

An Orignal Local Parody by EDWARD CORVEN.

AIR.—"Ship on Fire."

The storm ower the Tyne blew furious an' fast,
An the Pee Dee sair frighten'd stuck close to the mast;
The wind nearly upset wor coal laden keel
As roond Jarrow point, like a duck she did steel,
Wor skipper was teykin his pipe doon belaw,
When a greet roondy coal catched him reet on the jaw,
T'was Pee Dee that thraw'd it, poor soul he was wild
Cryin' skipper, wake up man, wor keels wreck'd an' spoiled.

Its geyn! the fierce sworlwind's flew to some other spot,
An' wor keel like a skiff cut alang like a shot—
The coals aw luik'd white in the beams o' the muen,
An wor skipper louped up then aw whussled a tune;
Thor was joy 'mang us a' as we floated alang,
An' Pee Dee half crazy gos a Newcassel sang,
Then skipper contented wi' beer blow'd his kite
To strengthen his nerves for he'd gat a sair fright.

How happy a'wl be when aw get doon to Sheels,
A'wl suen be safe moor'd 'mang the rest o' the keels,
Already in fancy "Lucky bob's" aw can spy,
An' the smoke fra' mi pipe curlin' up to the sky
My snug easy corner, my baccy an' beer,
Maw marrows a' sittin'—thor sangs an' thor cheer—
An' the bairns oyster bet 'fore she deed had to me,
Hoo, nice through the weter wor auld keel dis flee.

Gosh cap, aw smell fire, wor skipper did shoot
Fire, fire, then the Pee Dee an' him ran aboot,
An' thor voices like devils rose up in the air,
Then wor skipper knelt doon but uttered ne prayer.
Noo his knees knack'd the gither in agony wild,
Cryin' maw keel's awl afire, maw fortin's aw spoiled—
Fire, Fire, it was ragin' abune an' belaw,
An' the gobs o' the keelmen geyped wide at the seet,
They luiked like tom cats, i' the glare o the leet;
They try'd for to stop't, but it wadent gan oot—
We'll be roasted an' drown'd wor skipper did shoot,
The lowe fra' the coals gat higher an' higher?
Its a kind o' queer death to be frizzel'd wi' fire,
Awl alone on the river an' gan oot to sea,
Aws say skipper cries Airchy we'll aw trust to ye.

Wor skipper quite funky but like Tyne lads still brave,
He hail'd an' aud sculler wor bodies to save,
First entered the pe de wiv skipper's dog Bob;
It knaw'd Pee Dee saved it, an' licked his black gob,
Half roasted an' starved we floated away.
An' not being schoolars neyn o' us could pray;
The neet was pick dark, we'd been bet for a leet
Had it not been for leetnin that glummer'd that neet.
We wished for the morn an' at turntide aboot
The sun on the waters shone bonnily oot.
Yonder's Shiels! yonder's Shiels! cries Hue at the starn?
Aye, Peggys hole cries another aw fairl disarn,
They see us, they hail us, wor bait-pokes we waved,
The Pee Dee, the skipper, aye ivery yeyn's saved.

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THE

STAGE STRUCK KEELMAN.

An Original Local Song by E. CORVEN.

AIR.—"Bob and Joan."

Aw's Jimmy Julius Hannibal Cœsar,
A genius born for shootin'.
Aw can recite Hamlick, King Dick, the Warlock o' the Glen,
The Lonely Man o' the Tatie Garth, the King o' the Leers, Othello,
The Smashed bug; or the blood-stained bowlster, my neyme is Norval;
Noo, aw's the lad for spootin.
Aw've studied Shakemspear, aw ken his points or rather,
Although the folks that's here little knaws it aw's an awther.

SPOKEN.—Yis, aws' an awther, aw've wrote a play entitled the Flesh o' Thunder: or, the Desolate Tree by the Rosdside: an' the Lonely Man o' the blasted Heath: an' the four eyed Murderer. Its in fourteen acts an' a half. The music arranged by Frederick Jimmy Appollo Lumphead for 9 Gugaws.—Aw'll recite a' dark passage oot ont, as a specient.

Scene 1st, a coalpit—blue mountains in the distance.—We'll say the mountains is in America.

'Twas a dark, vary dark neet, the sun peep'd oot before the skies, the wind fell in fearful torrents, the clouds fell to the earth, and the donkeys turned thor backs on the comin' storm, and with thor melodious noise, gave a tarrefic he, ha, he, ha, he, ha. 'Twas then a perused my way by the blasted heath, meditating Codjitation an' Silly Quisin, when something seized me, a cold sweat came o'er my sleeved waiscoat. I fell doon insensible, an' when aw recovered, aw observed the four-eyed murderer gazin' upon me, aw seized him an' cast him forth into the boilin' hot cauld water: at that excitin'moment aw flew towards the ruins of the old abbey. Hush! what was that? Hark, I see a voice! no, no! tis the wind whistlin' through the air! In this tent I'll pitch my field! O let me behold the green fields of Sandgate, the blue mountains of Geyteshead and Jarrow, the tripe market where youthful fancy guided maw three halfpence a week pocket brass. Extacy—a shower o' black puddins, thickens my imagination. Light! lights! Richard's himself again.

For I'm Jimmy Julius Hannibal Cæser, etc.

Play acting's maw delight; aw's called the Sangate Spooter.
Besides the plays aw write, meykes me an oot an' ooter.
Love scenes an' murders te aw acts them up to nator.
The cheps upon the quay says awl turn a real firstrator.

SPOKEN.—Yes, rw've anither new play, entitled the Two Thickheeded Brothers, or the Life and Adventures of ¾d worth o' baccy, or the Keelbully's Ghost. Thor's a' kinds o' charecters in't, aw've ghosts, blue fire, red fire, Scuftors, doddle hunters, Organ weavers, cuiks, an' murderers, an' 4 comic cheps, here's a speech a policeman meykes to one o' the rooks.—Celestial, beautiful, divine creature, star of my fancy, staff of my existance, lantern of my hopes, fat of my eye, gravey of m y wi-hes, let me stand up and adore thee for ever on my knees. For thee aw wad be shot through the heart, (hat) drowned, cut up, slashed up, smashed up, made into saveloy, polonies, or German sasages, anatomized, conglamerized, stigmitized as an unworthy bobby. For thee. O ye crabs and fishes I would spout my blues, my— Let me gaze upon thee o horrible agony, thy lovely features—that turnip nose, them saucer eyes, thy red luxuriant hair, that figure thy quarter's wages, let me clutch them, make way there, 'tis the king! who calls,

For I'm Jimmy Julius Hannibal Cæser, etc.

My talent will be seen when actin' aw begin, sir,
For awl play before the queen with Charles Kean up at Windsor;
Aw's sure to cut him oot, he'll hae nae chanse wi' me, sir,
For when she hears me spoot, thor's neyn like me will please her.

SPOKEN.—Aw just think she see's me in that scene, in hamlick where the ghost comes. Angels an Ministers of grease confend us, be thou some sporits of earth or cobbler damn'd, bring ye hares frae Ravensworth for me or thee, sell thou comest in such a drunken ssate, aw'l toss thee for a pint o' fourpenny. He's waggin' on me, he wants to play at Skittees at the Crystal Palace, gan on aw l follow thee.

For aw's Jimmy Julius Hannibal Cæser, etc.

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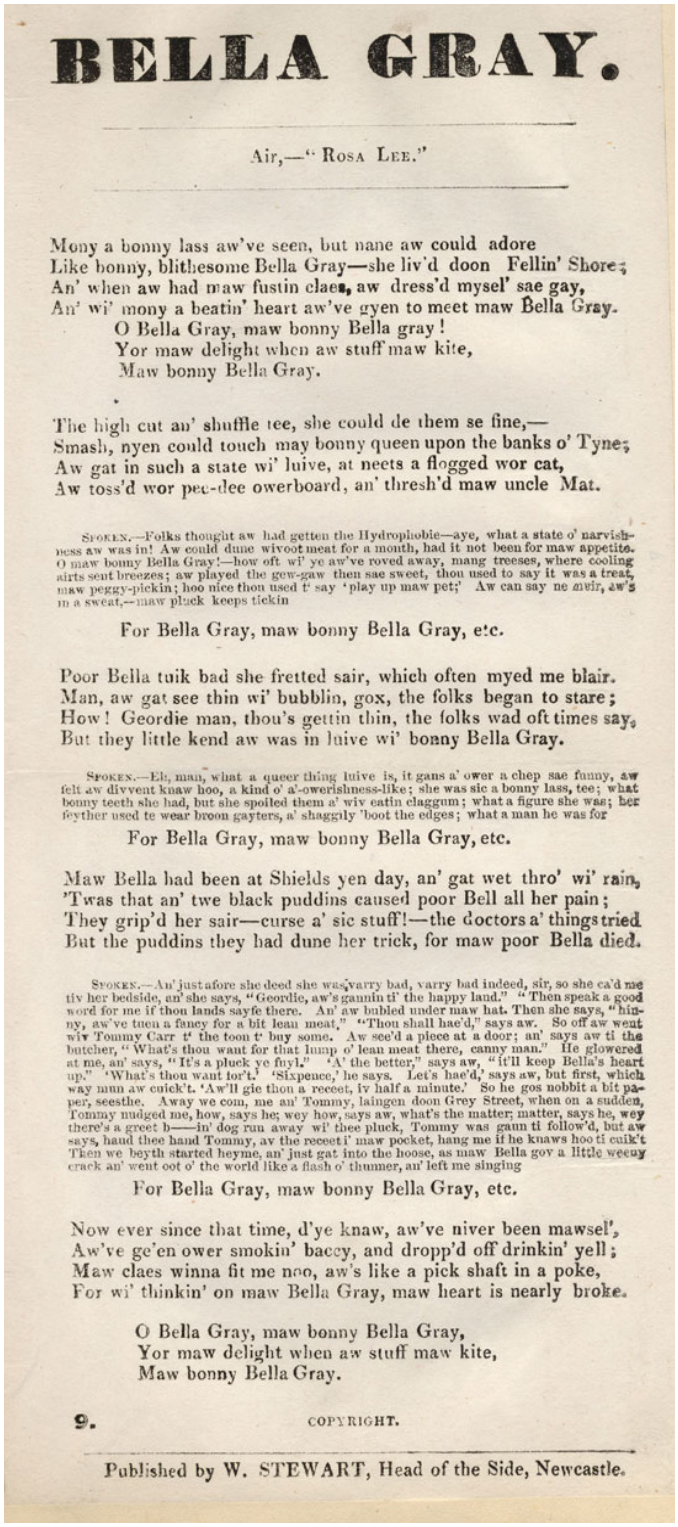
Bella Gray had appeared in *Random Rhymes*, but the 1853 version had additional patter in which 'Geordie' criticised his wife, whose forename was the same as Mrs Corven's, and her death left him 'singing'.

Asstrilly's Goold Fields satirised a pitman who had gone to Australia but was bitterly disappointed, and was set to Michael William Balfe's tune for Alfred Bunn's *I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marbled Halls*, an aria in their 1843 opera, *The Bohemian Girl*. 'Hell's

Kitchen' was a room at the back of the Flying Horse at 36 Groat Market, Newcastle, where the landlord chained the poker to the wall to stop it being used in the frequent fights among the regulars, who had their own rules of behaviour.

> [I]f one of the fraternity fell dead (drunk) he was taken to the Dead House, that was the farthest extremity of the kitchen. Then the rest of them retired to the next compartment adjoining, respectfully named 'the Vestry', with the determination of holding an inquest on the dead. The coroner and jury were empanelled. Then they went to business. But the first thing to do was to examine the dead, and take all dangerous weapons from him, such as half-crowns, fourpenny bits, or anything like that which was dangerous to him. Then, if there wasn't sufficient to defray the expenses of the inquest, the officers of the court had the authority to examine his boots (perhaps his coat), and if their value was sufficient to raise a drink, two of the jury were ordered off to Wilson's in Pilgrim Street, and according to the 'Laws of the Cobblers, Umbrellamen, Candymen and Loafers', the certificate of death (pawn ticket) was put in his pocket, so that when he rose again, he would have an idea where to go to seek salvation or consolation.[14]

Newcastle audiences would know that the 'Kitchen' was frequented by drunks.



BELLA GRAY.

Air,—"Rosa Lee."

Mony a bonny lass aw've seen, but nane aw could adore
Like bonny, blithesome Bella Gray—she liv'd doon Fellin' Shore;
An' when aw had maw fustin claes, aw dress'd mysel' sae gay,
An' wi' mony a beatin' heart aw've gyen to meet maw Bella Gray.
O Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella gray!
Yor maw delight when aw stuff maw kite,
Maw bonny Bella Gray.

The high cut an' shuffle tee, she could de them se fine,—
Smash, nyen could touch may bonny queen upon the banks o' Tyne;
Aw gat in such a state wi' luive, at neets a flogged wor cat,
Aw toss'd wor pee-dee owerboard, an' thresh'd maw uncle Mat.

Spoken.—Folks thought aw had getten the Hydrophobie—aye, what a state o' narvishness aw was in! Aw could dune wivoot meat for a month, had it not been for maw appetite. O maw bonny Bella Gray!—how oft wi' ye aw've roved away, mang treeses, where cooling airts sent breezes; aw played the gew-gaw then sae sweet, thou used to say it was a treat, maw peggy-pickin; hoo nice thou used t' say 'play up maw pet;' Aw can say ne mwir, aw's in a sweat,—maw pluck keeps tickin

For Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray, etc.

Poor Bella tuik bad she fretted sair, which often myed me blair.
Man, aw gat see thin wi' bubblin, gox, the folks began to stare;
How! Geordie man, thou's gettin thin, the folks wad oft times say,
But they little kend aw was in luive wi' bonny Bella Gray.

Spoken.—Eh, man, what a queer thing luive is, it gans a' ower a chep sae funny, aw felt aw divvent knaw hoo, a kind o' a'-owerishness-like; she was sic a bonny lass, tee; what bonny teeth she had, but she spoiled them a' wiv eatin claggum; what a figure she was; her feyther used te wear broon gayters, a' shaggily 'boot the edges; what a man he was for

For Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray, etc.

Maw Bella had been at Shields yen day, an' gat wet thro' wi' rain,
'Twas that an' twe black puddins caused poor Bell all her pain;
They grip'd her sair—curse a' sic stuff!—the doctors a' things tried
But the puddins they had dune her trick, for maw poor Bella died.

Spoken.—An' just afore she deed she was varry bad, varry bad indeed, sir, so she ca'd me tiv her bedside, an' she says, "Geordie, aw's gannin ti' the happy land." "Then speak a good word for me if thou lands sayfe there. An' aw bubled under maw hat. Then she says, "hinny, aw've tuen a fancy for a bit lean meat." "Thou shall hae'd," says aw. So off aw went wiv Tommy Carr t' the toon t' buy some. Aw see'd a piece at a door; an' says aw ti the butcher, "What's thou want for that lump o' lean meat there, canny man." He glowered at me, an' says, "It's a pluck ye fuyl." 'A' the better," says aw, "it'll keep Bella's heart up." 'What's thou want for't.' 'Sixpence,' he says. Let's hae'd,' says aw, but first, which way mun aw cuick't. 'Aw'll gie thou a receet, iv half a minute.' So he gos nobbit a bit paper, seesthe. Away we com, me an' Tommy, laingen doon Grey Street, when on a sudden, Tommy nudged me, how, says he; wey how, says aw, what's the matter; matter, says he, wey there's a greet b——in' dog run away wi' thee pluck, Tommy was gaun ti follow'd, but aw says, haud thee hand Tommy, av the receet i' maw pocket, hang me if he knaws hoo ti cuik't Then we beyth started heyme, an' just gat into the hoose, as maw Bella gov a little weeny crack an' went oot o' the world like a flash o' thunner, an' left me singing

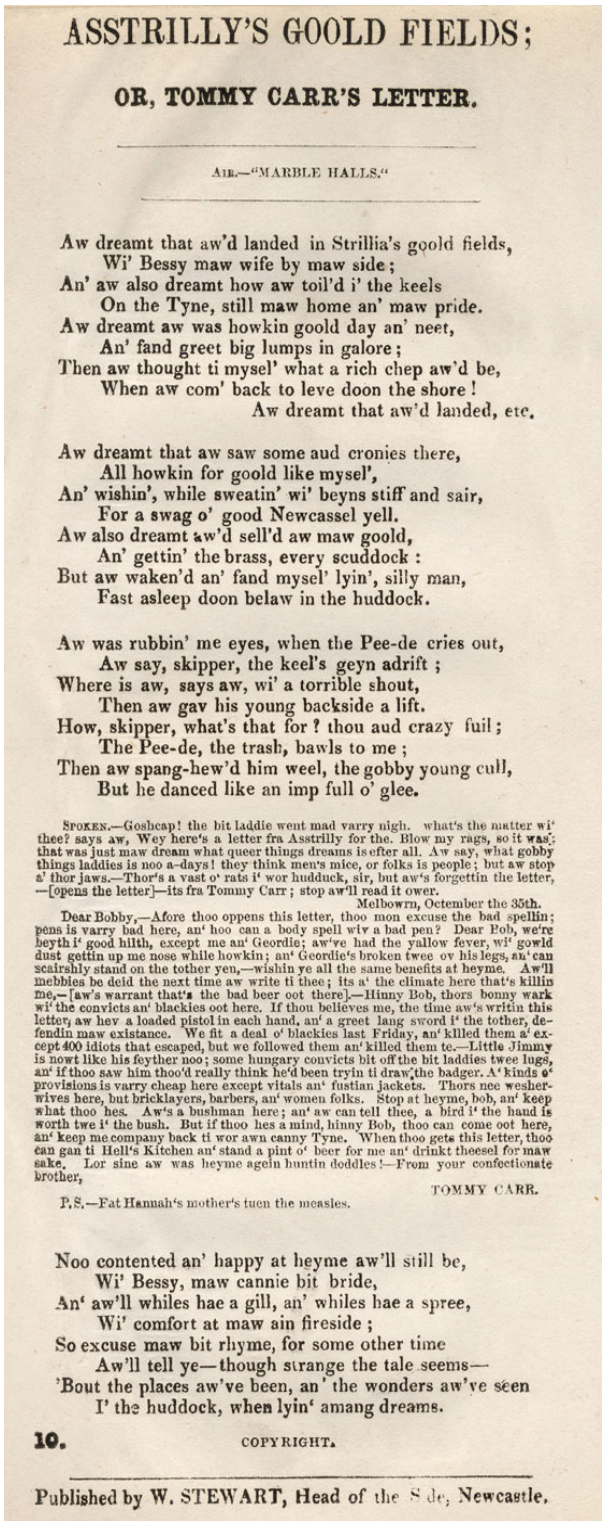
For Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray, etc.

Now ever since that time, d'ye knaw, aw've niver been mawsel',
Aw've ge'en ower smokin' baccy, and dropp'd off drinkin' yell;
Maw claes winna fit me noo, aw's like a pick shaft in a poke,
For wi' thinkin' on maw Bella Gray, maw heart is nearly broke.

O Bella Gray, maw bonny Bella Gray,
Yor maw delight when aw stuff maw kite,
Maw bonny Bella Gray.

9. COPYRIGHT.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.



ASSTRILLY'S GOOLD FIELDS;

OR, TOMMY CARR'S LETTER.

Air.—"MARBLE HALLS."

Aw dreamt that aw'd landed in Strillia's goold fields,
Wi' Bessy maw wife by maw side;
An' aw also dreamt how aw toil'd i' the keels
On the Tyne, still maw home an' maw pride.
Aw dreamt aw was howkin goold day an' neet,
An' fand greet big lumps in galore;
Then aw thought ti mysel' what a rich chep aw'd be,
When aw com' back to leve doon the shore!
Aw dreamt that aw'd landed, etc.

Aw dreamt that aw saw some aud cronies there,
All howkin for goold like mysel',
An' wishin', while sweatin' wi' beyns stiff and sair,
For a swag o' good Newcassel yell.
Aw also dreamt aw'd sell'd aw maw goold,
An' gettin' the brass, every scuddock:
But aw waken'd an' fand mysel' lyin', silly man,
Fast asleep doon belaw in the huddock.

Aw was rubbin' me eyes, when the Pee-de cries out,
Aw say, skipper, the keel's geyn adrift;
Where is aw, says aw, wi' a torrible shout,
Then aw gav his young backside a lift.
How, skipper, what's that for? thou aud crazy fuil;
The Pee-de, the trash, bawls to me;
Then aw spang-hew'd him weel, the gobby young cull,
But he danced like an imp full o' glee.

Spoken.—Goshcap! the bit laddie went mad varry nigh. what's the matter wi' thee? says aw, Wey here's a letter fra Asstrilly for the. Blow my rags, so it was; that was just maw dream what queer things dreams is efter all. Aw say, what gobby things laddies is noo a-days! they think men's mice, or folks is people; but aw stop a' thor jaws.—Thor's a vast o' rats i' wor hudduck, sir, but aw's forgettin the letter, —[opens the letter]—its fra Tommy Carr; stop aw'll read it ower.

Melbowrn, Octember the 35th.

Dear Bobby,—Afore thoo oppens this letter, thoo mon excuse the bad spellin; pens is varry bad here, an' hoo can a body spell wiv a bad pen? Dear Bob, we're beyth i' good hilth, except me an' Geordie; aw've had the yallow fever, wi' gowld dust gettin up me nose while howkin; an' Geordie's broken twee ov his legs, an' can scairshly stand on the tother yen,—wishin ye all the same benefits at heyme. Aw'll mebbies be deid the next time aw write ti thee; its a' the climate here that's killin me,—[aw's warrant that's the bad beer oot there].—Hinny Bob, thors bonny wark wi' the convicts an' blackies oot here. If thou believes me, the time aw's writin this letter, aw hev a loaded pistol in each hand, an' a greet lang sword i' the tother, defendin maw existance. We fit a deal o' blackies last Friday, an' killed them a' except 400 idiots that escaped, but we followed them an' killed them te.—Little Jimmy is nowt like his feyther noo; some hungary convicts bit off the bit laddies twee lugs, an' if thoo saw him thoo'd really think he'd been tryin ti draw the badger. A' kinds o' provisions is varry cheap here except vitals an' fustian jackets. Thors nee wesher-wives here, but bricklayers, barbers, an' women folks. Stop at heyme, bob, an' keep what thoo hes. Aw's a bushman here; an' aw can tell thee, a bird i' the hand is worth twe i' the bush. But if thoo hes a mind, hinny Bob, thoo can come oot here, an' keep me company back ti wor awn canny Tyne. When thoo gets this letter, thoo can gan ti Hell's Kitchen an' stand a pint o' beer for me an' drinkt theesel for maw sake. Lor sine aw was heyme agein huntin doddles!—From your confectionate brother,

TOMMY CARR.

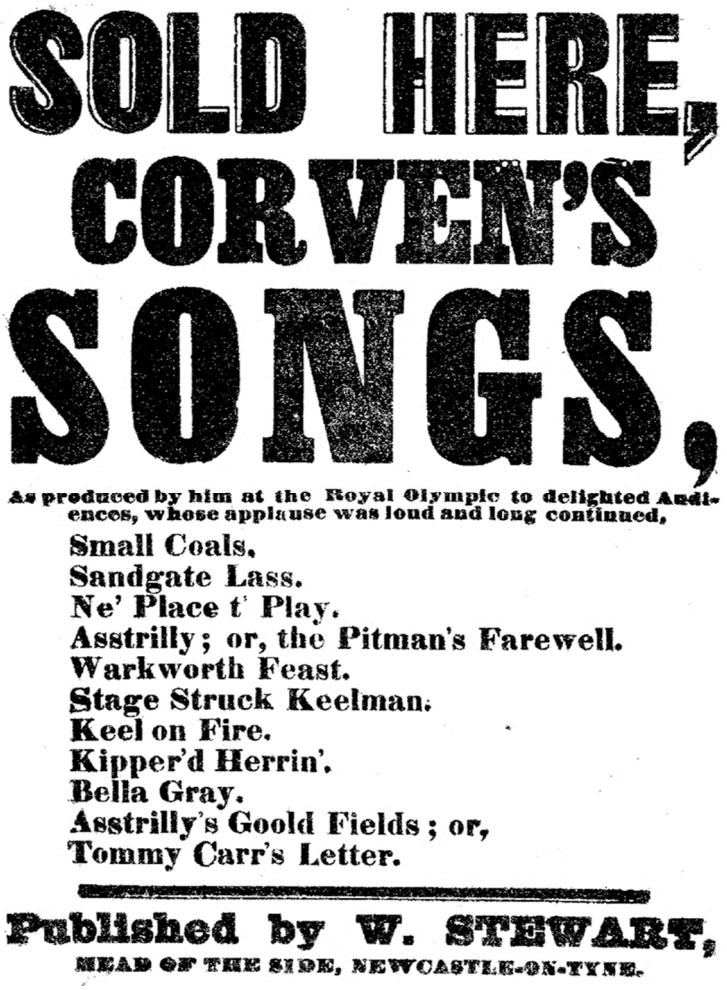
P.S.—Fat Hannah's mother's tuen the measles.

Noo contented an' happy at heyme aw'll still be,
Wi' Bessy, maw cannie bit bride,
An' aw'll whiles hae a gill, an' whiles hae a spree,
Wi' comfort at maw ain fireside;
So excuse maw bit rhyme, for some other time
Aw'll tell ye—though strange the tale seems—
'Bout the places aw've been, an' the wonders aw've seen
I' the huddock, when lyin' amang dreams.

10. COPYRIGHT.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

Corven's name did not appear on these two songs. Stewart stressed the copyright, though it is unclear who it belonged to, yet they had become so well-known that when he published a small poster he abbreviated their titles.


SOLD HERE,
CORVEN'S
SONGS,
As produced by him at the Royal Olympic to delighted Audiences, whose applause was loud and long continued,
Small Coals.
Sandgate Lass.
Ne' Place t' Play.
Asstrilly; or, the Pitman's Farewell.
Warkworth Feast.
Stage Struck Keelman.
Keel on Fire.
Kipper'd Herrin'.
Bella Gray.
Asstrilly's Goold Fields; or,
Tommy Carr's Letter.
Published by W. STEWART,
MEAD OF THE SIDE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
15

Not everyone in Newcastle was a fan of the musical fare available in pubs and concert halls.

An anonymous correspondent in the *Newcastle Guardian* praised the Sacred Harmonic Society, since there was

> no better school for the cultivation of the superior faculties than the performance of those grand oratorios, tending, as they most unquestionably do, to elevate and purify our moral nature; and casting into the shade all 'Free and Easy', 'Casino', and other prostitutions of the sacred science of music … and thus may rescue – in some degree - our population from vicious habits.

An anonymous correspondent from the Ropery Banks near St. Ann's replied that the Society's considerable expenditure and high admission prices were a 'fiscal restriction upon the dissemination of useful knowledge'.

> I am not averse to the bringing down of 'stars' when that can be done beneficially; but I protest against it when done to the exclusions of the many. The society itself is no gainer from the performances hitherto, for the extra money which is received at the door is lavished over the professionals whom they engage. For the last two concerts alone, not less a sum than £100 was expended in this manner. I am convinced that if the people of Newcastle have to be indebted to the Harmonic Society for the erection of a new Music Hall, they need a vast amount of patience, and the 'Casinos' may drive a roaring trade for some time to come.

It was little wonder that audiences 'nightly crowd the various "Free and Easy" resorts, "Saloons," &c.', and 'find enjoyment in hearing the prostitution of music'. At the crowded annual meeting of Newcastle Temperance Society, James Rewcastle proposal to ask the Council to add a clause to the Town Improvement Bill to close pubs on Sundays was unanimously agreed.[16]

Stewart's No. 11., *The Unfortunate Man*, used an image of a woman beating a child's bare backside and a tune whose original lyrics had a fatalistic attitude to married life. Corven's narrator made himself appear ridiculous, but he sympathised with 'half-paid' pitmen. He pointed out that they could become labourers in engineering factories, and referred to the punishment inflicted on blacklegs during the Tyne seamen's strike. The tune set for *The Factory Lass* has not been traced, but Corven evidently dressed as 'Pally', who joked about her parents both being keelmen, but shared their love of alcohol. She too was unashamed of her sexuality – making a man 'grind the Coffee' was a euphemism – and looked forward to being a mother, but she also loved to dance. In May 1853 Robert Nunn, the semi-professional Newcastle songwriter, singer and fiddler had died, aged 44, from 'Chronic Bronchitis Dropsy', which was associated with inhaling tobacco smoke, an occupational hazard

for performers. The registrar described him as a slater,[17] an occupation he had not followed after he was blinded by a fall from a roof as a young man, and local papers repeated the error, and gave his age as 43;[18] but 'Pally' showed him respect.

THE

UNFORTUNATE MAN.

A NEW LOCAL SONG.

WRITTEN AND SUNG BY EDWARD CORVEN AT THE ROYAL OLYMPIC.

Air,—"A Man that is Married."

Aw's poor Bobby Jones, aw hails frae the Fell,
But aw've seed some funny things i' maw time;
So maw lifetime's a' history aw mean for ti tell,
If thou thinks maw intrusion nae crime.
The first day of maw life was the neet aw was born;
The nurse said aw was as form as a rock.
Man, aw had a thick heed, or else aw'd been deed,
For that neet aw fell ower the bed stock.
O dear! O dear! lads, this is the way maw lifetime began,
Noo, is'nt aw not an unfortunate man?

Aw fell down a cellar when just three weeks awd,
An' gat kill'd but aw suen com' aboot.
Then suen as aw walk'd aw turn'd a wild lad,
An' pop'd maw feyther's best claes up the spoot.
Aw was tryin' to swim yen day, an' gat droun'd,
But that's nowt t' the troubles aw've had,
For a dog bit my leg just here, round an' round,
An' iver since then aw been mad.
O dear, etc.

Then they sent me to schule to meyke me be wise,
But in learning aw tuck ne delight;
Still thor was'nt a yen in the schule maw awn size,
Or bigger, that aw could'nt fight.
Dash the nyem of a schule aw began fo t' hate,
So aw started to work, silly cloon,
To hew doun a coal pit, but, unlucky fate,
The first time aw went nigh it aw fell doun.

Spoken.—Yis, aw fell doon, aw's elways meykin a stummel some way. Aw've been mair than fifty times blawn up wi' colliery explosions. Maw brains is nowt else noo but a mixture o' small coals an' gunpouther- But aw dropt pitwark since then, colliers isn't half paid noo, nor niver was paid as they owt te hae been, but the men that keeps the pot boilin is varry often thowt lees on. So aw dropt off, an' went to be a pudler at Hawks's factory, it's an awful het job, aw lost four noses at it. Efter that aw went ti strike for a blacksmith at Stephenson's an' the first blow aw struck aw chop'd nine fingers off me mates left hand. Then aw went to be a sailor, an' 'cause aw was seasick the hands tarred an' feathered me, (damn thor hands,) but they gat punished, the ship gat wrecked, an' a' hands lost, (except me,) sarve them reet They gat weshed on tiv a lonely island an' had ti live on seaweed an' cod liver oil for fowrteen years. As for me, aw was driven on the beach by the merciful waves, an' fand mesel amang marmaids at the bottom o' the seaside, they were playin at quoits for half a gallon aside; aw was meyde referee; aw leeved a lang time wi' them; but because aw waddent marrie all o' them they set me adrift on tiv a moontin where thor was nowt but wild animals that waddent shake hands wi' me. There's luck for ye. Aw've been in aboot ten thoosand lotteries an' nivver won nowt but an' aud pair o' shoes at a raffle, a chep stole them frae me when aw was gaun heyme wi' them, he waddent let me be lucky for once.

O dear, etc.

Aw've tell'd ye maw lifetime as weel as aw can,
So aw hope ye'll excuse an unfortunate man.

11. COPYRIGHT.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

THE

FACTORY LASS

OR PALLY JONES.

An Original Song, by E. Corven.

Air,—"Sunny Banks of Scotland.

Aw's Pally Jones the factory lass, an' fairly worth a score;
Maw feyther an' mother's keelmen, and we all leve doon the shore.
O laddie, ho! bonny on the door,
For aw's Pally Jones the factory lass.

Spoken.—Aw work at the spinnin' mill, sometimes at the white lead factory, an'

Aw leve doon on the shore.
O laddie, ho! bonny laddie, ho!

Oh! maw mother's sic a canny body her mouth hads three penorth o' rum,
An' feyther likes his whiskey toddy, but aw like beer begum.
O laddie, ho! ye've niver saw me before,
But aw's Pally Jones the factory lass,
That leve's doon the shore.

An' Bobby Nunn, that's deed an' geyn, used to fiddle doon the shore,
Often said, he niver saw the yen could touch me on the floor.
O laddie, ho, etc.

New sixes, cast offs, sylphs an' reels, aw could de them a' like fun;
Folks said aw was sae polkerfied, aw'd sic a bonny run.
O laddie, ho, etc.

Aw've set the men folks ravin' mad, thor's twe wants me to wed,
But aw've a canny blacksmith lad, folks call him bonny Ned.
O laddie, ho, etc.

Spoken.—He hes nice curly hair; an' sic nice ways wi' him. He's ganin t' hev me, an' aw's ganin t' hev him, so we'll set up hoose efter we get married. Aw say, which finger dis the ring gan on. Aw sure it meyks me feel queer when aw think on't; but noo for settin' up house, let me see, O aye, aw'll hev a feather bed i' the first place, wi' pillow heed an' foot, so as we can lie heeds t' tails if ony friends should com' to stop a day or se. Aw'll buy a coffee mill, and maek maw man grind the coffee—coffee beans, that's the sort. Aw'll hev flour pots, tea pot, sugar pots, milk pots, keyle pots, an' —— chamber pots. Aw'll hev an oil cloth, an' put a pattern on't mysel'; an' thou knaws we might hae bairns, so when aw is buyin' aw may as weel just buy a cradle, an' then when aw's rockin' the bairn to sleep aw'll sing

O laddie, ho! bonny on the door,
For aw's Pally Jones the factory lass.

12. COPYRIGHT.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

19

In June *The Era* claimed that the Wheat Sheaf was the 'favourite place of amusement' in Newcastle, but the Olympic had a 'liberal' attendance. The company still included 'E. Corven',[20] and a young engineer was a regular attender.

Thomas Allan earned good money at Hawthorn's locomotive works on Forth Banks, just below the Olympic, and the 20-year-old lived nearby with his parents in Ridley Court, 91 South Street. He recalled that Corven was a 'fair singer' and 'an excellent performer on the violin', with which he 'often occupied the stage agreeably for half an hour'. He also 'introduced a deal of speaking' with 'such wit and humour that it generally was the most "taking" part' of his songs, and he 'added to the attractions' of his performances by singing 'in character'. He 'literally took his audience by storm', and was an 'almost permanent member' of the Olympic company for a long time. He had few equals on Tyneside, and was the first local entertainer 'who combined the writing and singing of Tyneside songs as a profession'. 'Finding concert business to be his line', he 'devoted himself entirely' to singing, left Billy Purvis's company for good, 'travelled the North' and became a 'favourite everywhere'.[21]

6. Edward Corvan

In 1852 John Ross printed 'a large broadside of songs' on his 'Steam Machine',[1] and ten numbers of *The Songs of the Tyne*, intending to publish a book,[2] but then sold his business.

JOHN ROSS, PRINTER and PUBLISHER, late of the Royal Arcade, requests that, should there be any one having any Demands whatever against him, to send the same in, that they may be immediately discharged; and those who have not yet paid in their Accounts, are respectfully requested to do so to his Successor, Mr John Gilbert, on or before Tuesday, the 9th inst.
32, Trafalgar-street, November 3, 1852.

JOHN GILBERT,
PRINTER, STATIONER, &c.,

BEGS to intimate to the Public generally of Newcastle and the Neighbourhood, that he has entered upon the Premises, in the Arcade, lately occupied by Mr John Ross, and assures those who may favour him with their Patronage, that the same perseverance and determination to oblige, which were so signally displayed in his Predecessor, shall be the rule of guidance with him in all the Branches of his Business.
Printing by Steam on the Premises.
Royal Arcade, November 3, 1852.

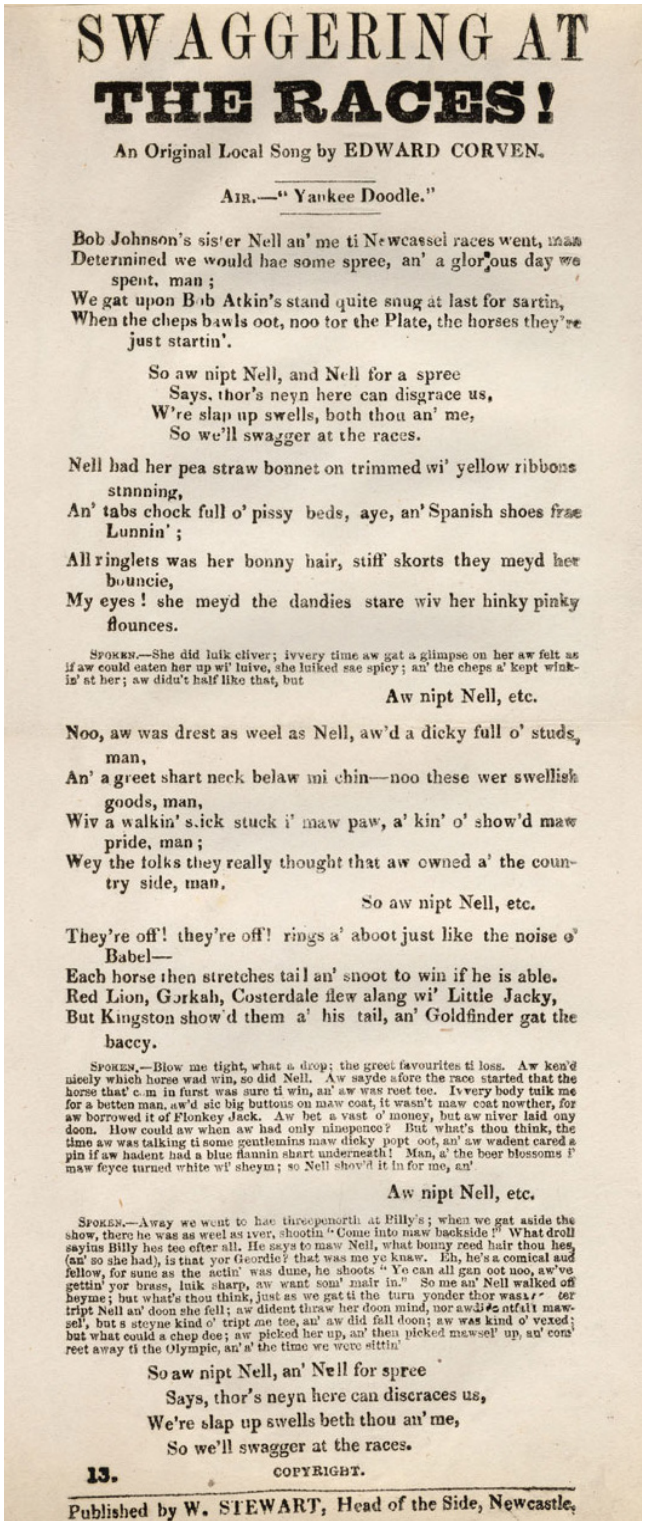
Gilbert, the 18-year-old son of a Nottinghamshire-born 'Eating House Keeper' in Pilgrim Street, was an engraver, and his 16-year-old brother was a 'Lithographic Printer'. John advertised for an apprentice,[3] and Ross and his family left for Australia.[4]

Ross had printed J.P. Robson's *Poetic Pencillings; or, Lyrics of Life*,[5] and the author sent a copy to Prince Albert, who got an underling to write that he was 'most graciously pleased to accept it and to return his best thanks'.[6] Late in 1852 Robson was writing *The Life and Adventures of Benjamin Embleton*, the veteran Miners' Association leader, and Thomas Dodds printed numbers in the Side.[7] *Reynold's News*, the radical London paper, reviewed the first two favourably, noted that Embleton was 'in the winter of life' and hoped its sale would 'smooth his final years',[8] but no numbers have been found.

Robert Atkin had been landlord the Royal Oak between Back Row and Bailiffgate in Newcastle since the late 1840s.

[9]

The buildings opposite were pulled down to make way for the station approach, but the 39-year-old 'Publican, his 36-year-old wife Dorothy, their 16-year-old daughter and Dorothy's parents were still at the Royal Oak in summer 1853 when Ned Corven used a tune that was at least 200 years old for *Swaggering at the Races!* His young male narrator bragged that he and his sweetheart 'Nell' visited Bob Atkin's stand and thought themselves the equals of the 'dandies' and 'gentlemins' who gave Nell admiring winks. Her young man wore a blue flannel shirt under his smart outer clothes and she adjusted his a false shirt front, or 'dicky', which was a euphemism for a penis. They watched the Northumberland Plate from the Grandstand, saw Billy Purvis performing outside his booth, paid 3d to watch the show, but then set off to the Olympic. *He Wad be a Noodle* had appeared in *Random Rhymes*, but the 1853 patter included single *entendres* about French sexual predators. It omitted the verse about the 'something' being emptied onto people's heads in the Side, and either Stewart or the typographer decided to abbreviate the word 'arse'.



SWAGGERING AT THE RACES!

An Original Local Song by EDWARD CORVEN.

AIR.—"Yankee Doodle."

Bob Johnson's sister Nell an' me ti Newcassel races went, man
Determined we would hae some spree, an' a glorious day we spent, man;
We gat upon Bob Atkin's stand quite snug at last for sartin,
When the cheps bawls oot, noo tor the Plate, the horses they're just startin'.

So aw nipt Nell, and Nell for a spree
Says, thor's neyn here can disgrace us,
W're slap up swells, both thou an' me,
So we'll swagger at the races.

Nell had her pea straw bonnet on trimmed wi' yellow ribbons stnnning,
An' tabs chock full o' pissy beds, aye, an' Spanish shoes frae Lunnin';
All ringlets was her bonny hair, stiff skorts they meyd her bouncie,
My eyes! she meyd the dandies stare wiv her hinky pinky flounces.

SPOKEN.—She did luik cliver; ivvery time aw gat a glimpse on her aw felt as if aw could eaten her up wi' luive, she luiked sae spicy; an' the cheps a' kept winkin' at her; aw didn't half like that, but

Aw nipt Nell, etc.

Noo, aw was drest as weel as Nell, aw'd a dicky full o' studs, man,
An' a greet shart neck belaw mi chin—noo these wer swellish goods, man,
Wiv a walkin' stick stuck i' maw paw, a' kin' o' show'd maw pride, man;
Wey the folks they really thought that aw owned a' the country side, man.

So aw nipt Nell, etc.

They're off! they're off! rings a' aboot just like the noise o' Babel—
Each horse then stretches tail an' snoot to win if he is able.
Red Lion, Gorkah, Costerdale flew alang wi' Little Jacky,
But Kingston show'd them a' his tail, an' Goldfinder gat the baccy.

SPOKEN.—Blow me tight, what a drop; the greet favourites ti loss. Aw ken'd nicely which horse wad win, so did Nell. Aw sayde afore the race started that the horse that' c m in first was sure ti win, an' aw was reet tee. Ivvery body tuik me for a betten man, aw'd sic big buttons on maw coat, it wasn't maw coat nowther, for aw borrowed it of Flonkey Jack. Aw bet a vast o' money, but aw niver laid ony doon. How could aw when aw had only nineponce? But what's thou think, the time aw was talking ti some gentlemins maw dicky popt oot, an' aw wadent cared a pin if aw hadent had a blue flannin shart underneath! Man, a' the beer blossoms i' maw feyce turned white wi' sheym; so Nell show'd it in for me, an'

Aw nipt Nell, etc.

SPOKEN.—Away we went to hae threepenorth at Billy's; when we gat aside the show, there he was as weel as iver, shootin "Come into maw backside!" What droll sayins Billy hes tee efter all. He says to maw Nell, what bonny reed hair thou hes, (an' so she had), is that yor Geordie? that was me ye knaw. Eh, he's a comical aud fellow, for sune as the actin' was dune, he shoots "Ye can all gan oot noo, aw've gettin' yor brass, luik sharp, aw want som' mair in." So me an' Nell walked off heyme; but what's thou think, just as we gat ti the turn yonder thor was a ter tript Nell an' doon she fell; aw dident thraw her doon mind, nor aw did nt fall mawsel', but s steyne kind o' tript me tee, an' aw did fall doon; aw was kind o' vexed; but what could a chep dee; aw picked her up, an' then picked mawsel' up, an' com reet away ti the Olympic, an' a' the time we were sittin'

So aw nipt Nell, an' Nell for spree
Says, thor's neyn here can disgraces us,
We're slap up swells beth thou an' me,
So we'll swagger at the races.

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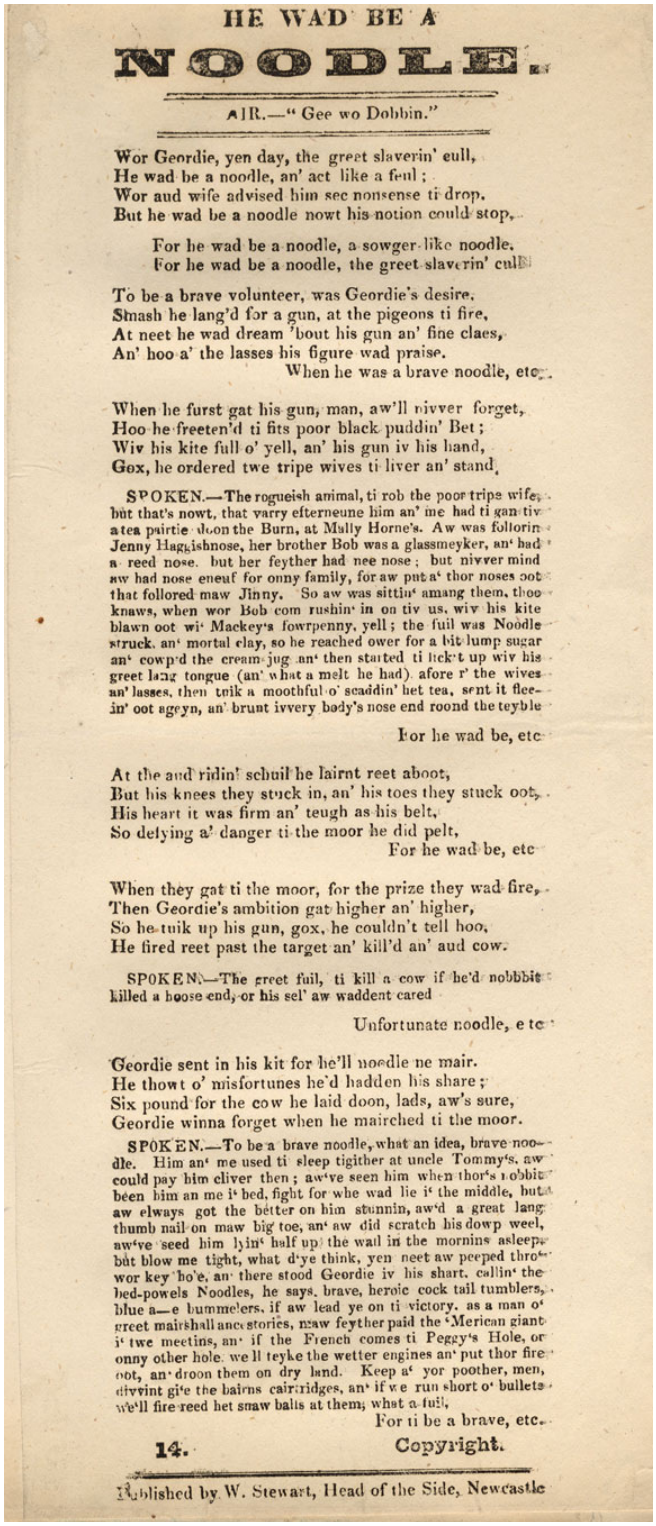

HE WAD BE A

NOODLE.

AIR.—"Gee wo Dobbin."

Wor Geordie, yen day, the greet slaverin' eull,
He wad be a noodle, an' act like a feul;
Wor aud wife advised him sec nonsense ti drop,
But he wad be a noodle nowt his notion could stop,

For he wad be a noodle, a sowger-like noodle,
For he wad be a noodle, the greet slaverin' eull.

To be a brave volunteer, was Geordie's desire,
Smash he lang'd for a gun, at the pigeons ti fire,
At neet he wad dream 'bout his gun an' fine claes,
An' hoo a' the lasses his figure wad praise.
When he was a brave noodle, etc.

When he furst gat his gun, man, aw'll nivver forget,
Hoo he freeten'd ti fits poor black puddin' Bet;
Wiv his kite full o' yell, an' his gun iv his hand,
Gox, he ordered twe tripe wives ti liver an' stand,

SPOKEN.—The rogueish animal, ti rob the poor tripe wife, but that's nowt, that varry efterneune him an' me had ti gan tiv a tea partie doon the Burn, at Mally Horne's. Aw was follorin Jenny Haggishnose, her brother Bob was a glassmeyker, an' had a reed nose, but her feyther had nee nose; but nivver mind aw had nose eneuf for onny family, for aw put a' thor noses oot that follored maw Jinny. So aw was sittin' amang them, thoo knaws, when wor Bob com rushin' in on tiv us, wiv his kite blawn oot wi' Mackey's fowrpenny, yell; the fuil was Noodle struck, an' mortal clay, so he reached ower for a bit lump sugar an' cowp'd the cream-jug an' then started ti lick't up wiv his greet lang tongue (an' what a melt he had) afore r' the wives an' lasses, then tuik a moothful o' scaddin' het tea, sent it fleein' oot ageyn, an' brunt ivvery body's nose end roond the teyble

For he wad be, etc

At the aud ridin' schuil he lairnt reet aboot,
But his knees they stuck in, an' his toes they stuck oot,
His heart it was firm an' teugh as his belt,
So defying a' danger ti the moor he did pelt,
For he wad be, etc

When they gat ti the moor, for the prize they wad fire,
Then Geordie's ambition gat higher an' higher,
So he tuik up his gun, gox, he couldn't tell hoo,
He fired reet past the target an' kill'd an' aud cow.

SPOKEN.—The greet fuil, ti kill a cow if he'd nobbbit killed a hoose end, or his sel' aw waddent cared

Unfortunate noodle, etc

Geordie sent in his kit for he'll noodle ne mair.
He thowt o' misfortunes he'd hadden his share;
Six pound for the cow he laid doon, lads, aw's sure,
Geordie winna forget when he mairched ti the moor.

SPOKEN.—To be a brave noodle, what an idea, brave noodle. Him an' me used ti sleep tigither at uncle Tommy's, aw could pay him cliver then; aw've seen him when thor's nobbit been him an me i' bed, fight for whe wad lie i' the middle, but aw always got the better on him stunnin, aw'd a great lang thumb nail on maw big toe, an' aw did scratch his dowp weel, aw've seed him lyin' half up the wall in the mornins asleep, but blow me tight, what d'ye think, yen neet aw peeped thro' wor key hole, an there stood Geordie iv his shart, callin' the bed-powels Noodles, he says, brave, heroic cock tail tumblers, blue a—e bummelers, if aw lead ye on ti victory, as a man o' greet mairshall ancestories, maw feyther paid the 'Merican giant i' twe meetins, an' if the French comes ti Peggy's Hole, or onny other hole, we'll teyke the wetter engines an' put thor fire oot, an' droon them on dry land. Keep at yor poother, men, divvint gie the bairns cairridges, an' if we run short o' bullets we'll fire reed het smaw balls at them; what a fuil,
For ti be a brave, etc.

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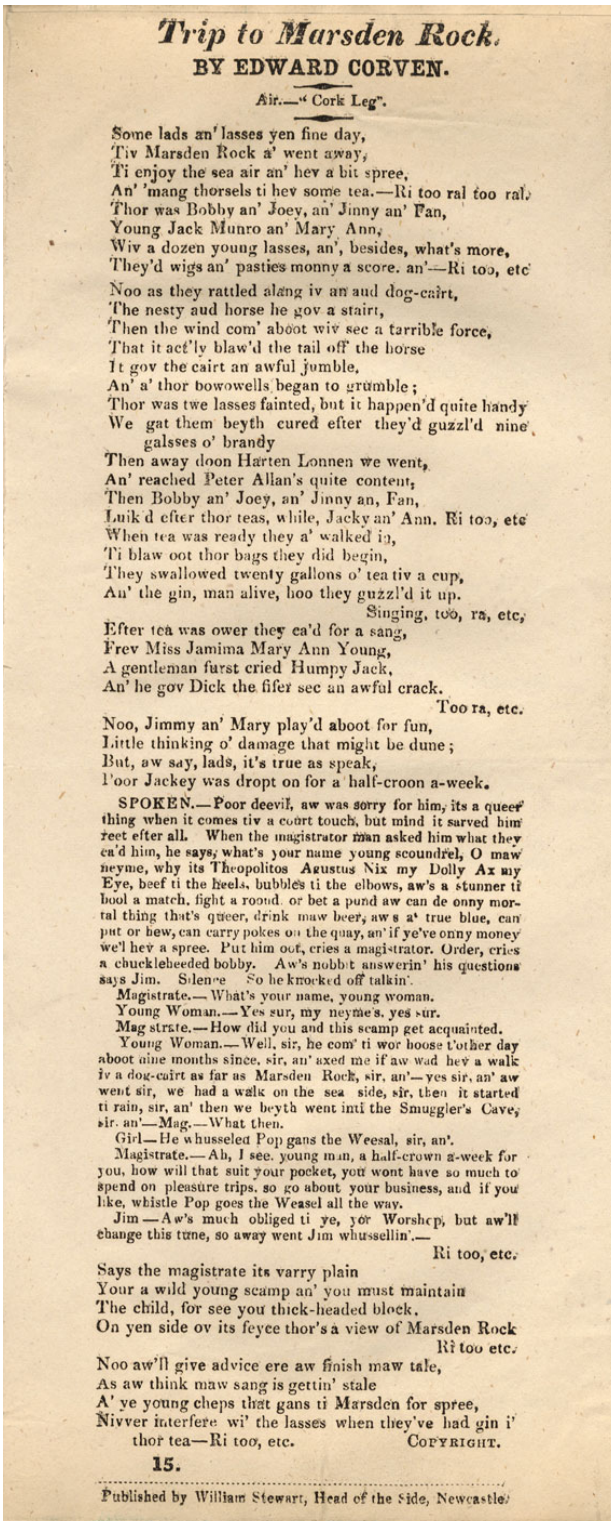
10

John Embleton Smith recalled that Corven's 'burlesque ditty' about the 'Noodles' was 'not lacking in the elements of the broadest comedy' and 'enjoyed much popularity' at the Olympic, since nobody 'who once witnessed the singer's lugubrious grimaces when giving the refrain', or 'listened to the tumultuous applause which greeted his mock expressions of indignant grief, will readily forget the scene'.[11] Soon after the races the Olympic lessee received a summons.

On 14 July Robert Howard was charged with staging 'theatrical performances' without a licence.[12] Witnesses testified that the hall was 'fitted up with a stage containing foot-lights, side-wings, and various ornaments usual to a theatre'. Part of the show was a 'Chinese Feast of Lanterns' in which children danced onstage and three men dressed as a Highlander, an Irishman and an English sailor performed 'characteristic dances'; but there was 'nothing in the shape of dialogue' and the bench dismissed the case.[13] Dancing was popular on Tyneside, and especially at Marsden Rock near South Shields.

Peter Allen was born in Tranent, around 1762, and his wife was three months younger. Peter junior was born in Scotland around 1799,[14] but in the early 1800s the family moved to Whitburn in County Durham, where Peter senior became Sir Hedworth Williamson's gamekeeper,[15] and later that of the Marquess of Londonderry. Young Peter subsequently succeeded his father, married Elizabeth and started a family,[16] and in spring 1828 he advertised 'Wines and Spirits of the best Quality, Good Stabling, and a steady Hostler' at the Ship Inn.[17] He worked at Marsden quarries, and enlarged the Marsden Rock cave

begun by 'Jack the Blaster' and formed a kitchen, bar, ballroom and five bedrooms. His family lived there in summer and later did so permanently after he carved out seven more rooms. He was suspected of smuggling, and had found it difficult to persuade magistrates to grant him an alcohol licence,[18] but in summer he and his wife sold beer and hired a 'crude orchestra' to play for dances.[19] John Clay and the Dean and Chapter leased the land adjoining this Marsden Grotto and claimed rent in 1848, but Allen refused. Early in 1850 he agreed to take a lease for 21 years, but he died in August, aged 51.[20] Elizabeth ran the business,[21] but in 1853 Corven knew it by her late husband's name. He used a tune associated with a song published in London nine years earlier,[22] and popularised by Sam Cowell, which mocked a wealthy Dutchman's uncontrollable steam-powered artificial leg.[23] John Allen was the licensee of the Fairless Arms in Wapping Street, South Shields, which had a Free Concert Music Saloon,[24] and Corven's *Maw Stepmother* or, Billy Bag the Glutton won 'great Applause'. Some of it was in the vernacular, but 'greedy varocious young Ruffian' showed a 'cockney' influence. William and Thomas Fordyce had printed the satirical *Teetotal Society Leaders* in Newcastle a decade earlier, and its tune was also known as *The Dandy Fiddler*.[25]



Trip to Marsden Rock.

BY EDWARD CORVEN.

Air.—"Cork Leg".

Some lads an' lasses yen fine day,
Tiv Marsden Rock a' went away,
Ti enjoy the sea air an' hev a bit spree,
An' 'mang thorsels ti hev some tea.—Ri too ral too ral.
Thor was Bobby an' Joey, an' Jinny an' Fan,
Young Jack Munro an' Mary Ann,
Wiv a dozen young lasses, an', besides, what's more,
They'd wigs an' pasties monny a score. an'—Ri too, etc

Noo as they rattled alang iv an aud dog-cairt,
The nesty aud horse he gov a stairt,
Then the wind com' aboot wiv sec a tarrible force,
That it act'ly blaw'd the tail off the horse
It gov the cairt an awful jumble,
An' a' thor bowowells began to grumble;
Thor was twe lasses fainted, but it happen'd quite handy
We gat them beyth cured efter they'd guzzl'd nine galsses o' brandy
Then away doon Harten Lonnen we went,
An' reached Peter Allan's quite content,
Then Bobby an' Joey, an' Jinny an, Fan,
Luik'd efter thor teas, while, Jacky an' Ann. Ri too, etc
When tea was ready they a' walked in,
Ti blaw oot thor bags they did begin,
They swallowed twenty gallons o' tea tiv a cup,
An' the gin, man alive, hoo they guzzl'd it up.
Singing, too, ra, etc,
Efter tea was ower they ca'd for a sang,
Frev Miss Jamima Mary Ann Young,
A gentleman furst cried Humpy Jack,
An' he gov Dick the fifer sec an awful crack.
Too ra, etc.
Noo, Jimmy an' Mary play'd aboot for fun,
Little thinking o' damage that might be dune;
But, aw say, lads, it's true as speak,
Poor Jackey was dropt on for a half-croon a-week.

SPOKEN.—Poor deevil, aw was sorry for him, its a queer thing when it comes tiv a court touch, but mind it sarved him reet efter all. When the magistrator man asked him what they ca'd him, he says, what's your name young scoundrel, O maw neyme, why its Theopolitos Agustus Nix my Dolly Ax my Eye, beef ti the heels, bubbles ti the elbows, aw's a stunner ti bool a match, fight a roond or bet a pund aw can de onny mortal thing that's queer, drink maw beer, aw's a' true blue, can put or hew, can carry pokes on the quay, an' if ye've onny money we'l hev a spree. Put him oot, cries a magistrator. Order, cries a chuckleheeded bobby. Aw's nobbit answerin' his questions says Jim. Silence So he knocked off talkin'.

Magistrate.—What's your name, young woman.
Young Woman.—Yes sur, my neyme's. yes sur.
Magistrate.—How did you and this scamp get acquainted.
Young Woman.—Well, sir, he com' ti wor hoose t'other day aboot nine months since, sir, an' axed me if aw wad hev a walk iv a dog-cairt as far as Marsden Rock, sir, an'—yes sir, an' aw went sir, we had a walk on the sea side, sir, then it started ti rain, sir, an' then we beyth went inti the Smuggler's Cave, sir, an'—Mag.—What then.
Girl—He whusseled Pop goes the Weesal, sir, an'.
Magistrate.—Ah, I see. young man, a half-crown a-week for you, how will that suit your pocket, you wont have so much to spend on pleasure trips. so go about your business, and if you like, whistle Pop goes the Weasel all the way.
Jim—Aw's much obliged ti ye, yor Worshep, but aw'll change this tune, so away went Jim whussellin'.—
Ri too, etc.

Says the magistrate its varry plain
Your a wild young scamp an' you must maintain
The child, for see you thick-headed block,
On yen side ov its feyce thor's a view of Marsden Rock
Ri too etc.
Noo aw'll give advice ere aw finish maw tale,
As aw think maw sang is gettin' stale
A' ye young cheps that gans ti Marsden for spree,
Nivver interfere wi' the lasses when they've had gin i' thor tea—Ri too, etc.

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15.

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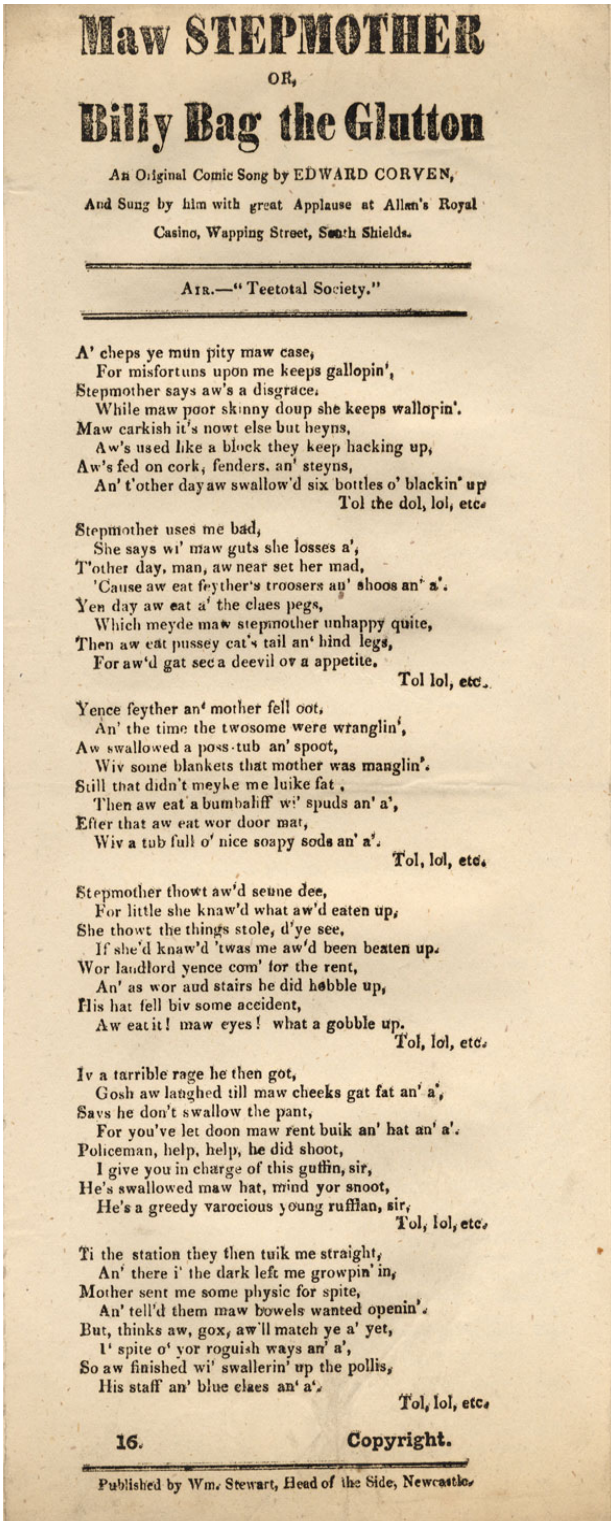

Maw STEPMOTHER

OR,

Billy Bag the Glutton

An Original Comic Song by EDWARD CORVEN,

And Sung by him with great Applause at Allan's Royal Casino, Wapping Street, South Shields.

Air.—"Teetotal Society."

A' cheps ye mun pity maw case,
For misfortuns upon me keeps gallopin',
Stepmother says aw's a disgrace.
While maw poor skinny doup she keeps wallopin'.
Maw carkish it's nowt else but beyns,
Aw's used like a block they keep hacking up,
Aw's fed on cork, fenders, an' steyns,
An' t'other day aw swallow'd six bottles o' blackin' up
Tol the dol, lol, etc.

Stepmother uses me bad,
She says wi' maw guts she losses a',
T'other day, man, aw near set her mad,
'Cause aw eat feyther's troosers an' shoos an' a'.
Yen day aw eat a' the claes pegs,
Which meyde maw stepmother unhappy quite,
Then aw eat pussey cat's tail an' hind legs,
For aw'd gat sec a deevil ov a appetite.
Tol lol, etc.

Yence feyther an' mother fell oot,
An' the time the twosome were wranglin',
Aw swallowed a poss-tub an' spoot,
Wiv some blankets that mother was manglin'.
Still that didn't meyke me luike fat,
Then aw eat a bumbaliff wi' spuds an' a',
Efter that aw eat wor door mat,
Wiv a tub full o' nice soapy sods an' a'.
Tol, lol, etc.

Stepmother thowt aw'd seune dee,
For little she knaw'd what aw'd eaten up,
She thowt the things stole, d'ye see,
If she'd knaw'd 'twas me aw'd been beaten up.
Wor landlord yence com' for the rent,
An' as wor aud stairs he did hobble up,
His hat fell biv some accident,
Aw eat it! maw eyes! what a gobble up.
Tol, lol, etc.

Iv a tarrible rage he then got,
Gosh aw laughed till maw cheeks gat fat an' a',
Says he don't swallow the pant,
For you've let doon maw rent buik an' hat an' a'.
Policeman, help, help, he did shoot,
I give you in charge of this guffin, sir,
He's swallowed maw hat, mind yor snoot,
He's a greedy varocious young ruffian, sir,
Tol, lol, etc.

Ti the station they then tuik me straight,
An' there i' the dark left me growpin' in,
Mother sent me some physic for spite,
An' tell'd them maw bowels wanted openin'.
But, thinks aw, gox, aw'll match ye a' yet,
I' spite o' yor roguish ways an' a',
So aw finished wi' swallerin' up the pollis,
His staff an' blue claes an' a'.
Tol, lol, etc.

16.

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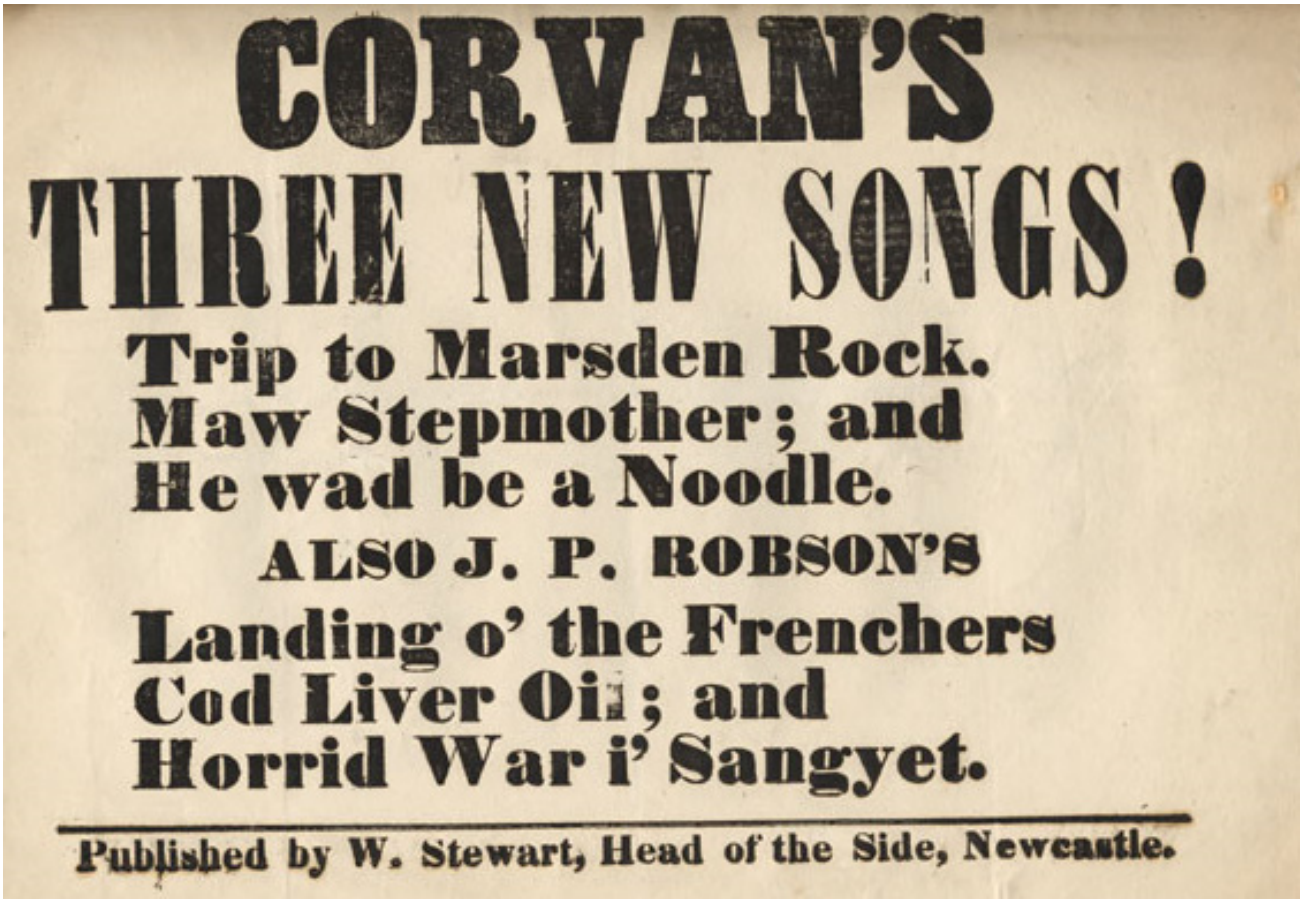
Stewart advertised 'Corvan's Three New Songs!', yet *He wad be a Noodle* and *Horrid War i' Sangyet* were over two years old.

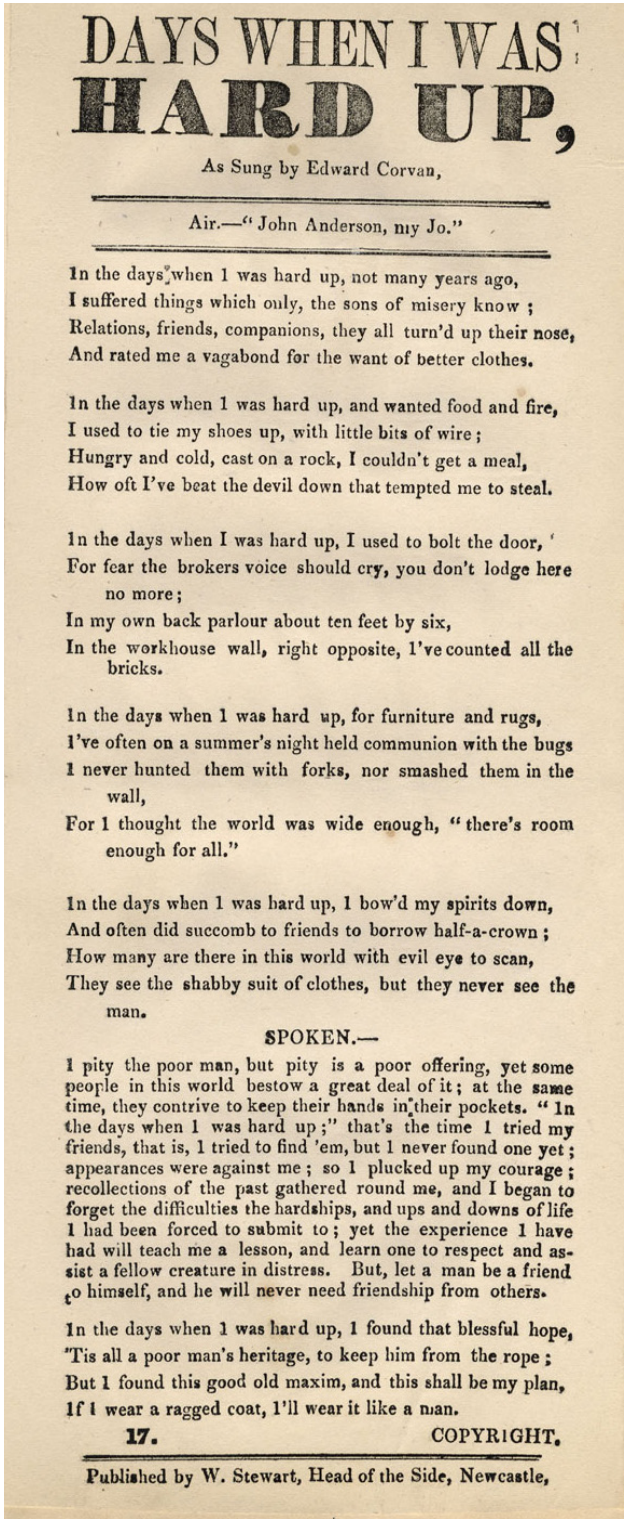

CORVAN'S
THREE NEW SONGS !
Trip to Marsden Rock.
Maw Stepmother; and
He wad be a Noodle.
ALSO J. P. ROBSON'S
Landing o' the Frenchers
Cod Liver Oil; and
Horrid War i' Sangyet.
Published by W. Stewart, Head of the Side, Newcastle.
26

A self-portrait signed 'Ned Corvan' probably dates from this period.

27

The next two songs in Stewart's series used that surname, and the singer adopted it.

Corvan used the tune of a Burns' love song for *Days When I Was Hard Up* and the narrator recalled his poverty 'many years ago' in a tiny, bug-infested room overlooking a workhouse, when family and friends failed to help. The lyrics were in 'standard' English and 'As sung, by Edward Corvan', not written by him, yet Stewart claimed it was 'copyright'. Corvan used a tune associated with a London stage song that was at least 140 years old for *Hairy Gobs! An' Fine Moosecatchers!*, 'An Original Song, Written and Sung by EDWARD CORVAN'. The patter ridiculed the claim that moustaches could prevent tuberculosis and protect a husband from being hit by heavy household items thrown by his wife. His narrator's fellow passengers in a third class railway carriage regard him as a 'forriner', but the reference suggests that Corvan had engagements at some distance from Tyneside and was accustomed to travelling by rail.



DAYS WHEN I WAS HARD UP,

As Sung by Edward Corvan,

Air.—"John Anderson, my Jo."

In the days when I was hard up, not many years ago,
I suffered things which only, the sons of misery know;
Relations, friends, companions, they all turn'd up their nose,
And rated me a vagabond for the want of better clothes.

In the days when I was hard up, and wanted food and fire,
I used to tie my shoes up, with little bits of wire;
Hungry and cold, cast on a rock, I couldn't get a meal,
How oft I've beat the devil down that tempted me to steal.

In the days when I was hard up, I used to bolt the door,
For fear the brokers voice should cry, you don't lodge here no more;
In my own back parlour about ten feet by six,
In the workhouse wall, right opposite, I've counted all the bricks.

In the days when I was hard up, for furniture and rugs,
I've often on a summer's night held communion with the bugs
I never hunted them with forks, nor smashed them in the wall,
For I thought the world was wide enough, "there's room enough for all."

In the days when I was hard up, I bow'd my spirits down,
And often did succomb to friends to borrow half-a-crown;
How many are there in this world with evil eye to scan,
They see the shabby suit of clothes, but they never see the man.

SPOKEN.—

I pity the poor man, but pity is a poor offering, yet some people in this world bestow a great deal of it; at the same time, they contrive to keep their hands in their pockets. "In the days when I was hard up;" that's the time I tried my friends, that is, I tried to find 'em, but I never found one yet; appearances were against me; so I plucked up my courage; recollections of the past gathered round me, and I began to forget the difficulties the hardships, and ups and downs of life I had been forced to submit to; yet the experience I have had will teach me a lesson, and learn one to respect and assist a fellow creature in distress. But, let a man be a friend to himself, and he will never need friendship from others.

In the days when I was hard up, I found that blessful hope,
'Tis all a poor man's heritage, to keep him from the rope;
But I found this good old maxim, and this shall be my plan,
If I wear a ragged coat, I'll wear it like a man.

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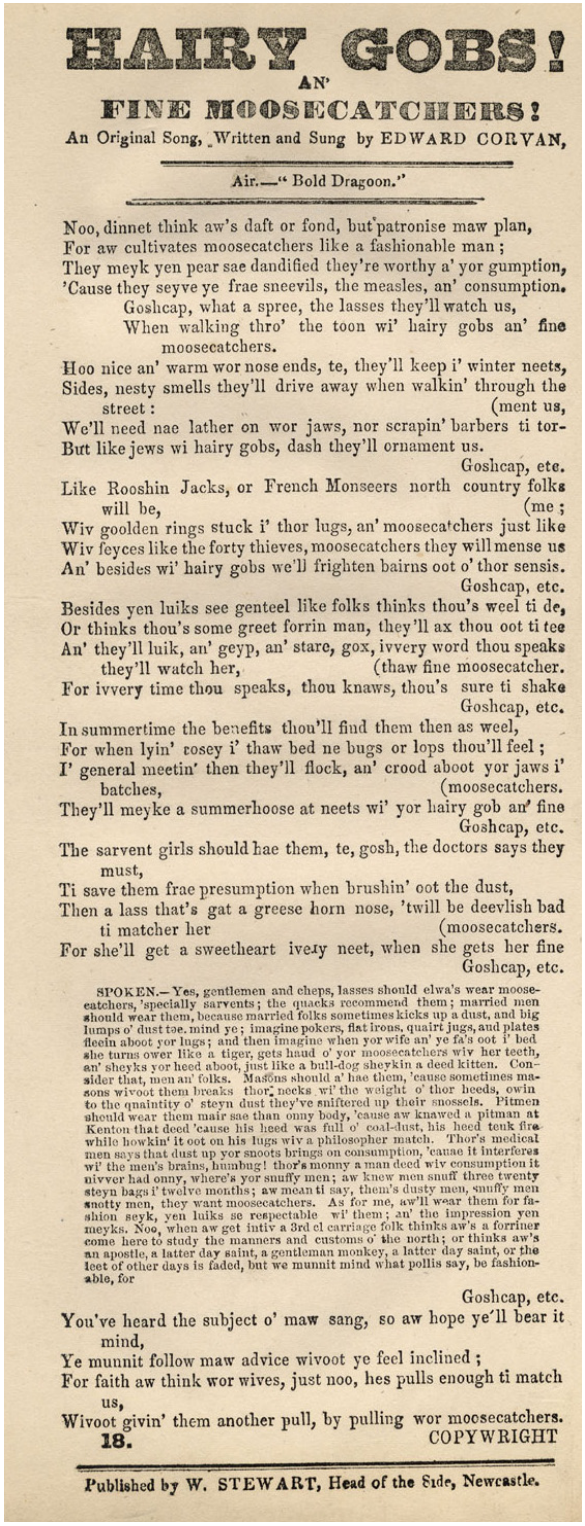

HAIRY GOBS!

AN'

FINE MOOSECATCHERS!

An Original Song, Written and Sung by EDWARD CORVAN,

Air.—"Bold Dragoon."

Noo, dinnet think aw's daft or fond, but patronise maw plan,
For aw cultivates moosecatchers like a fashionable man;
They meyk yen pear sae dandified they're worthy a' yor gumption,
'Cause they seyve ye frae sneevils, the measles, an' consumption.
Goshcap, what a spree, the lasses they'll watch us,
When walking thro' the toon wi' hairy gobs an' fine moosecatchers.

Hoo nice an' warm wor nose ends, te, they'll keep i' winter neets,
Sides, nesty smells they'll drive away when walkin' through the street: (ment us,
We'll need nae lather on wor jaws, nor scrapin' barbers ti tor-
But like jews wi hairy gobs, dash they'll ornament us.
Goshcap, etc.

Like Rooshin Jacks, or French Monseers north country folks will be, (me;
Wiv goolden rings stuck i' thor lugs, an' moosecatchers just like
Wiv feyces like the forty thieves, moosecatchers they will mense us
An' besides wi' hairy gobs we'll frighten bairns oot o' thor sensis.
Goshcap, etc.

Besides yen luiks see genteel like folks thinks thou's weel ti de,
Or thinks thou's some greet forrin man, they'll ax thou oot ti tee
An' they'll luik, an' geyp, an' stare, gox, ivvery word thou speaks they'll watch her, (thaw fine moosecatcher.
For ivvery time thou speaks, thou knaws, thou's sure ti shake
Goshcap, etc.

In summertime the benefits thou'll find them then as weel,
For when lyin' cosey i' thaw bed ne bugs or lops thou'll feel;
I' general meetin' then they'll flock, an' crood aboot yor jaws i' batches, (moosecatchers.
They'll meyke a summerhoose at neets wi' yor hairy gob an' fine
Goshcap, etc.

The sarvent girls should hae them, te, gosh, the doctors says they must,
Ti save them frae presumption when brushin' oot the dust,
Then a lass that's gat a greese horn nose, 'twill be deevlish bad ti matcher her (moosecatchers.
For she'll get a sweetheart ivery neet, when she gets her fine
Goshcap, etc.

SPOKEN.—Yes, gentlemen and cheps, lasses should elwa's wear moosecatchers, 'specially sarvents; the quacks recommend them; married men should wear them, because married folks sometimes kicks up a dust, and big lumps o' dust tae. mind ye; imagine pokers, flat irons, quairt jugs, and plates flein aboot yor lugs; and then imagine when yor wife an' ye fa's oot i' bed she turns ower like a tiger, gets haud o' yor moosecatchers wiv her teeth, an' sheyks yor heed aboot, just like a bull-dog sheykin a deed kitten. Consider that, men an' folks. Masons should a' hae them, 'cause sometimes masons wivoot them breaks thor necks wi' the weight o' thor heeds, owin to the quaintity o' steyn dust they've sniftered up their snossels. Pitmen should wear them mair sae than onny body, 'cause aw knawed a pitman at Kenton that deed 'cause his heed was full o' coal-dust, his heed teuk fire while howkin' it oot on his lugs wiv a philosopher match. Thor's medical men says that dust up yor snoots brings on consumption, 'cause it interferes wi' the men's brains, humbug! thor's monny a man deed wiv consumption it nivver had onny, where's yor snuffy men; aw knew men snuff three twenty steyn bags i' twelve months; aw mean ti say, them's dusty men, snuffy men snotty men, they want moosecatchers. As for me, aw'll wear them for fashion seyk, yen luiks se respectable wi' them; an' the impression yen meyks. Noo, when aw get intiv a 3rd cl carriage folk thinks aw's a forriner come here to study the manners and customs o' the north; or thinks aw's an apostle, a latter day saint, a gentleman monkey, a latter day saint, or the leet of other days is faded, but we munnit mind what pollis say, be fashionable, for
Goshcap, etc.

You've heard the subject o' maw sang, so aw hope ye'll bear it mind,
Ye munnit follow maw advice wivoot ye feel inclined;
For faith aw think wor wives, just noo, hes pulls enough ti match us,
Wivoot givin' them another pull, by pulling wor moosecatchers.

18. COPYWRIGHT

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

28

In August John Selkirk bound the 12 numbers of *Selkirk's Songs and Ballads for the People* as a book, and the *Newcastle Courant* felt that *Tyne Lads For Ever!* qualified Edward Corven – not Corvan - as one of 'our local poets'.[29]

Over 90 percent of dwellings in All Saints parish where Corvan had grown up had no water tap and 18,000 people had to use the farthing *pants*.[30] There was a serious drought that summer,[31] and reservoirs were low, so the private water company drew it from a tidal part of the Tyne and the Council adjourned for a fortnight.[32] By September six people had died of cholera in Newcastle and one in Gateshead,[33] but Robert Howard advertised in the *Newcastle Guardian*.

TO BUILDERS, CONTRACTORS, &c.
PERSONS wishful to Contract for the erection of the NEW OLYMPIC MUSIC HALL, in THORNTON STREET, may see Plans, Specifications, &c., at Mr Coxon's, Durham Ox; or at Mr ROBT. HOWARD'S, Royal Olympic Music Hall. Early application is necessary. [34]

By 26 September 433 people had died in Newcastle, mostly from cholera, but about 40 from diarrhoea.[35] On the 30th Howard announced that he would not necessarily accept the cheapest tender,[36] and he auctioned timber on 14 October.[37] That month a doctor had found 30 cases of diarrhoea in Craig's Alley,[38] and another found five dead there and 50 with fever in nine rooms.[39] By November all but 37 of the 1,527 deaths had been in workers' families.[40] On the 4th the death toll included 120 from diarrhoea, out of 1,533, [41] and 450 deaths had been in All Saints parish.[42] On the 10th Howard advertised in *The Era*.

ROYAL OLYMPIC MUSIC HALL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. — Mr. ROBERT HOWARD respectfully informs the Profession and his Friends, that the above New and Elegant Stone Building will open on Saturday, December the 10th, fitted up in the most magnificent manner, capable of holding nearly two thousand persons. Professionals wishing to open with Mr. H. must apply immediately to the above address; and, to ensure a reply, to enclose postage stamp. The above splendid building is situate in the centre of the town, and in one of the best localities in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The above is 105 feet in length, thirty-six feet in width, and thirty-two feet in height.—Royal Olympic, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Nov. 10, 1853.

Each member of the audience would have around one-fifth of a square metre of space.

John Sessford's family of nine lived in a rented, five-room dwelling in Percy Court, but the landlord put it and four others up for sale.[43] On 11 December the *Newcastle Courant* noted that the Wheat Sheaf had 'very respectable' audiences, and on the 16th, when its company included a female opera singer, a female ballad singer and William and Ceda, 'the inimitable Sable Harmonists', Balmbra stressed his 'principles of morality and good order'.[44] Billy Purvis died that day in Hartlepool and was buried there on the 18th.[45]

The Welsh harper, John Parry, had composed the tune of *Cader Idris* (*Arthur's Chair*) in 1804,[46] and Charles Matthews had used it for *Jenny Jones* in the 1820s.[47] Corvan set his *Deeth of Billy Purvis* to that tune and sang it with 'great success and effect'. He drew a full-length portrait of Purvis on a black board and 'Turning to it with comic gravity, and pointing to the mouth, he used to say: "Poor canny aud fellow, thou's deed an gyen, but many a half quairt has gyen down there"', and his audiences roared with laughter.[48] No original of Stewart's No. 19. has been found, but it was republished the following year.

DEETH OF BILLY PURVIS.

Aud Billy's geyne dead, now, frae worldly cares freed now;
Ne mair sports he'll heed now, on Wear or Tyneside;
Still his neyme leeves in story, Tyne lads was his glory,
For when he amused them his heart bet wi' pride.
But he's cut off at last now, his days they're past now;
Ne mair, poor aud man, his bundle he'll steal;
That bundle for pastime, he's stole for the last time,
For deeth's corked him off to the land of the leal.

Aud Billy's geyne dead, now frae worldly cares freed now,
For death's corked him off to the land of the leal.

Ne mair teyles ye'll tell, oh, maw canny aud fellow,
How ye've swallow'd up crab-fish, and locked up men's jaws.
Ne mair thou'll dance neatly, or play thaw pipes sweetly,
Nor perform Hocus Pocus that gained sic applause,
For we'll see ye ne mair, man, at hoppin' or fair, man,
Stand up in yor glory 'mang actors outside,
For that tyrant, King Death, man, stop'd wor clown's breeth, man,
And closed now for ever poor Billy's backside.
Aud Billy's geyne, &c.

Ne mair at wor races, friend Billy thou'll grace us,
Nor call Geordies in yor fine show to admire;
For, oh, 'twas his boast then, fine dramas, and ghosts then,
Wi' pantomine plays full of reed and blue fire.
What troubles through life, man, what cares and what strife, man,
He's had to amuse us—beyth aud folks and young;
Oh! I think with emotion and tears of devotion,
On the days when aw first lisp'd his neyme wi' maw tongue.

Spoken.—Yes, them was the days that we can niver forget—wor schuil days. We had ne humbeggin pollis then, nobbit canny aud watchmen, that yen might hev knocked down wi' a pipe stopple. We had ne railways in Billy's youthful days, and times was far better then than they are now. Aw recollect when Billy was actor, 'bout thirty years since—them was maw happy days; aw wad beg, borrow, or steal to get a luck at aud Billy's backside—poor canny aud fellow; he used to be king of the Spital. Them was maw youthful days, and mony a yen's beside me. Aw've seen me gaun about wi' maw shirt tail stickin' out that far behint that aw used it for a pocket handkisher; and as for shoes the only pair aw had on maw feet was the pair the cobbler had away mendin'; but what did aw care about shoes? aw had big toes like steyns. O what music aw fund in the bells of St. Nicholas, when the Easter holidays meyde their appearance. How light was maw youthful heart—ne stain was there to mar maw happiness; wi' what plishure aw booled maw peyst eggs on the green—but that green's ne mair—but like wor favourite clown and Northumbrian jester, geyne for iver. Where's a' his funny sayin's that set a' the Geordies in a roar, they are geyne, but Billy will niver be forgotten.

Aud Billy's geyne dead now, frae worldly cares freed now,
Ne mair sports hee'll heed now, on Wear or Tyneside,
Still his neyme leeves in story, Tyne lads was his glory,
For when he amused them his heart beat wi' pride.
But oh! aw'll remember the 15th of December,
In the year '53 died wor aud king of Tyne,
And left us in mournin' without ony warnin',
The friends of his youth, and the days of lang syne,
But the friends we love best now, his bones cannot rest now,
So, Newcassel folks, think of these words of mine,
Let's hev him laid down then, in wor awn canny town then,
Else his ghost will be wanderin' at neets on the Tyne.
Aud Billy's geyne, &c.

49

In spite of the reference to 'thirty years since' the patter was probably based on Corvan's childhood recollections of the 1830s.

Stewart's No.20., *The Queen's Second Visit*, had appeared in *Random Rhymes* in 1850. Corvan's *Prince Albert's Babby Hoose* showed contempt for workers prepared to pawn their belongings and deprive their children of food. Stewart described it as 'An original Song written and sung by Edward Corven', not Corvan, and since the Great Exhibition had taken place in 1851, the lyrics could well have been two years old. Years earlier Charles Dickens had mercilessly parodied Henry Russell's *The Fine Old English Gentleman*,[50] and 'Corven' specified its tune.

THE QUEEN'S SECOND VISIT,

Or, the Openin' o' wor Greet Central Station.

By Edward Corvan.

AIR.—"Bow Wow Wow."

Prince Albert an' the queen thou knaws thor heed o' a' wor nation,
They beyth com doon the other day, to open wor new station,
Beyth rich and poor from a' pairts flock'd for ivery yen was keen,
Ti hev a look at them they keep, Prince Albert and the queen.
Tol, lol, lol, etc.

Sic noise an' clamour i' wor toon aw niver heard afore, sir,
An' cheps half drunk at thor awn expense, join'd i' the loyal roar sir;
Subscriptions raised for fireworks, man, went fleein up in the air, sir,
But Newcastle folks thor a' se rich for thor brass they dinnet care sir.

Twe bonny rooms they had fit oot for the queen an' corporation.
To blaw thor bags thor was ne doot when she landed i' wor station
Sic preparation, blow me tight, capt all aw'd ivver seen, sir,
They had twe pictures dune biv Scott, like Prince Albert and the queen, sir,

The folks they waited a' the morn, a' full of expectation
At last the queen iv a bonny train com ridin i' wor station,
A keelman chep amang the crood espied her in her glory,
He swore their Bet was a better like queen than ony Queen Victori'

Noo had she opened the pawnshops oot, she'd gat a greet mair praise, sir,
And let the poor folks had thor awn, thor bits o' Sunda, claithes, sir.
Or had she meyde the pants run beer, aye, whisky, rum, or gin, sir,
She'd getten monny a hearty cheer when she left wor coaly Tyne, sir.
Tol, lol, lol, etc.

Or had she opened the kitty doors and letten poor souls oot, sir,
They'd hail her like an angel sent wi' monny a loyal shout, sir,
Or had she opened oot her purse, she might dune warse, aw'm sure sir,
And left a hundred pound or se to help to feed the poor, sirs.
Tol, lol, lol, etc.

Cuckoo Jack an' me, smash, on a greet hoose top we stuck, sir,
We nearly broke wor necas, begox, in tryin to get a luik sir;
Prince Albert twig'd us on the tiles, begox, how he did stare, sir,
He wished us a good efternoon, what could a prince de mair, sir.
Tol, lol, lol, etc.

May we elwa's hev what dis wor turn, as through this life we pass sirs,
And then we'll leeve like kings an' queens, if we nobbit hev the brass, sirs;
May blessins tend wor canny toon, wor mayor and corporation,
So drink success to working men, and wor fine Central Station
Tol, lol, lol, etc-

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20.

Published by W. Stewart, Head of the Side, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

PRINCE ALBERTS'
BABBY HOOSE,

Or the Greet Exhibition of 1851.

An original Song written and sung by Edward Corven

AIR,—"Fine old English Gentleman."

Aw's sartin wonders winna cease when aw comes to think upon
Prince Albert's greet big babby hoose for eighteen fifty-one;
'Twas called an Exhibition, meyde oot o' magic glass,
T' let in leet beyth day an' neet t' seyve expense of gas,
For Prince Albert's greet big babby hoose for 1851.

What lots o' queer things aw seed there sent ower frev forrin' pairts,
Wiv a lot o' queer things frev Newcastle sent up in Keeside cairts.
Goshcap they sent Hydrolic Jack wiv his crane—noo that's a choker—
An' three or four weel dress'd aud wives brought up hell's kitchen poker.
To mense Prince Albert's babby hoose for 1851.

They sent twe Newcassel grunstones up alang wi' Cuckoo Jack,
An' a box o' thunner an' leetnin that nivver meyde a crack;
Besides a stunnin' plan they fund for movin' off a hump;
Wi' a model o' Candlish in his skiff, an' wor canny aud Vicker's Pump,
To mense Prince Albert's babby hoose for 1851.

They sent Ned Corven's sangs up te, sold by Stewart at the Side,
An' a model o' St. Nicholas church, wor fine aud church an' pride;
Alang wi' the cuddy's jaw bone that Samson used, ye ken,
When he walloped a' the Philistines an' killed a thousand men.
To mense Prince Albert's babby hoose for 1851.

Wor aud wife sent a rowlin' pin, it's nowther lee or fable,
Meyde oot the greet big clubby stick wi' which Cain killed poor Abel;
And an aud wife up in Gallowgate, to keep the fashions ripe,
Sent up a fustain jacket, lads, bran new meyde oot o' tripe.
To mense Prince Albert's babby hoose for 1851.

What lots o' foreigners aw seed there, an' amang them lots o' prigs,
An' Mason an' Turner frev Newcassel up tiv a' thor rigs;
An' a pair o' Shakespears slippers Jack Hodge fund at the fell;
Gox it's maw opinion they'd hev aud Nick if it wasent for the smell.

SPOKEN.—O Brimstone! blow me tight what a spree if aud Nick had pump'd a' fire an' singed a' the foreigners hairy gobs. The exhibition maybe hes dune good, but aw cannot seed, poor folks hadn't the brass t' gan without callin' at Uncle's, an' then it was

Gan away, pawn away, mind dinna stop,
For knowledge poor folks will be reachin';
Half-starve your bairns, shove all up the "pop,"
To see Albert's grand exhibition.
An' mense Prince Albert's babby hoose for 1851.

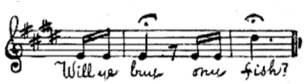
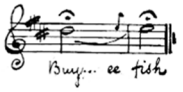
Ye may jaw 'boot Solomon's temple an' things ye nivver saw,
An' 'boot the hoose that Jack built—but this fairly bang'd them a'.
Frev a moosetrap tiv a midge's eye ye might seed a' things se stunnin',
So what fuils they've been that hesn't seen the glorious sights at Lunnin,
An' Prince Albert's exhibition the one of modern times.

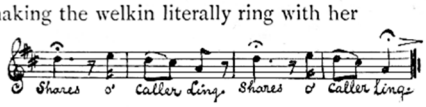
21. COPYRIGHT.

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

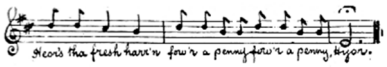
51

Stewart had not published any 'Corven' songs in 1851 and the supply of new songs had almost dried up, but not quite. George Haswell was a young boy in the early 1850s and heard street cries in Cullercoats.

How delightful the clarion-like ring from the strong, clear larynx of the Cullercoats fisher-lass as

she strode on her way, bearing on her broad haunches the mighty "creel"—giving the difficult interval of a major seventh with a precision quite amazing; or sending through the morning air, with limpid purity of tone, the equally strange—

or again, making the welkin literally ring with her



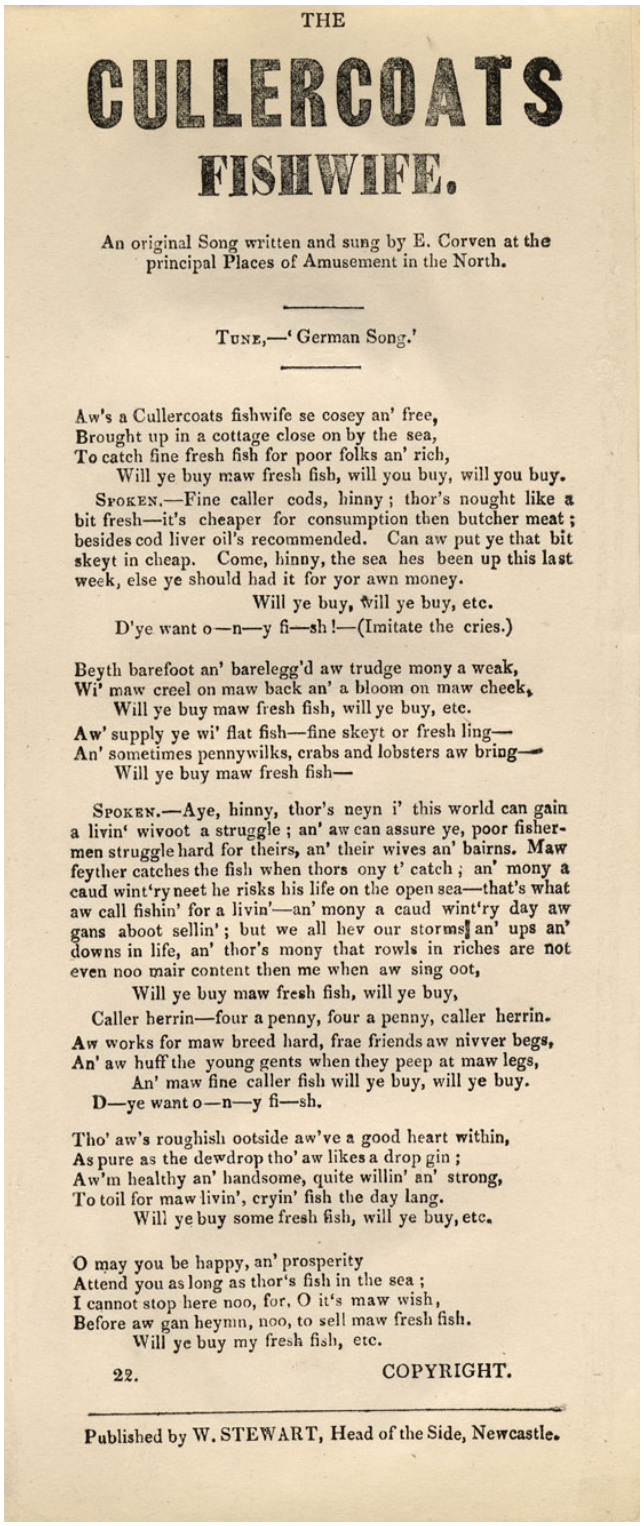
In the herring season, when, as often as not, the market was glutted with a big take—there being no outlet by rail to the greater world of England—the sleepy thoroughfares would be stirred by the tumult of a horde of fish hawkers carting the shimmering booty away to inland villages, or to farmsteads where it could be used as manure; but, usually, the relation of supply to demand found vocal statement in this strange phrase; strange in its broken rhythm, in the



weird defiance of tonal relationship in its final note, and not less strange in the persistence with which it haunts the memory of a Shieldsman.

52

Cullercoats fishwives wore a print bodice with a coloured handkerchief tucked inside, a short blue flannel skirt with many tucks, home-knitted stockings and strong shoes, and some of them carried up to 25 kilos of cod, haddock, herring and other fish as far away as Newcastle.[53] Stewart credited *The Cullercoats Fishwife* to 'Corven', who specified a tune also known as *Lillie's a Lady* for lyrics about the dignity of female labour. Stewart advertised all 22 of 'Corvan's Popular Songs' alongside Robert Emery's songs about the deaths of Bobby Nunn and Billy Purvis, and three by J.P. Robson, including his anti-Irish *Horrid War i' Sangeyt*. Improbably, Stewart claimed to have almost 10,000 local, comic and sentimental songs for sale, and listed outlets across Tyneside, and as far away as Carlisle, but 'E. Corvan' – not Corven - was the only one in Sunderland.



THE

CULLERCOATS FISHWIFE.

An original Song written and sung by E. Corven at the principal Places of Amusement in the North.

TUNE,—'German Song.'

Aw's a Cullercoats fishwife se cosey an' free,
Brought up in a cottage close on by the sea,
To catch fine fresh fish for poor folks an' rich,
Will ye buy maw fresh fish, will you buy, will you buy.

SPOKEN.—Fine caller cods, hinny; thor's nought like a bit fresh—it's cheaper for consumption then butcher meat; besides cod liver oil's recommended. Can aw put ye that bit skeyt in cheap. Come, hinny, the sea hes been up this last week, else ye should had it for yor awn money.

Will ye buy, will ye buy, etc.
D'ye want o—n—y fi—sh!—(Imitate the cries.)

Beyth barefoot an' barelegg'd aw trudge mony a weak,
Wi' maw creel on maw back an' a bloom on maw cheek,
Will ye buy maw fresh fish, will ye buy, etc.
Aw' supply ye wi' flat fish—fine skeyt or fresh ling—
An' sometimes pennywilks, crabs and lobsters aw bring—
Will ye buy maw fresh fish—

SPOKEN.—Aye, hinny, thor's neyn i' this world can gain a livin' wivoot a struggle; an' aw can assure ye, poor fishermen struggle hard for theirs, an' their wives an' bairns. Maw feyther catches the fish when thors ony t' catch; an' mony a caud wint'ry neet he risks his life on the open sea—that's what aw call fishin' for a livin'—an' mony a caud wint'ry day aw gans aboot sellin'; but we all hev our storms an' ups an' downs in life, an' thor's mony that rowls in riches are not even noo mair content then me when aw sing oot,

Will ye buy maw fresh fish, will ye buy,
Caller herrin—four a penny, four a penny, caller herrin.
Aw works for maw breed hard, frae friends aw nivver begs,
An' aw huff the young gents when they peep at maw legs,
An' maw fine caller fish will ye buy, will ye buy.
D—ye want o—n—y fi—sh.

Tho' aw's roughish ootside aw've a good heart within,
As pure as the dewdrop tho' aw likes a drop gin;
Aw'm healthy an' handsome, quite willin' an' strong,
To toil for maw livin', cryin' fish the day lang.
Will ye buy some fresh fish, will ye buy, etc.

O may you be happy, an' prosperity
Attend you as long as thor's fish in the sea;
I cannot stop here noo, for, O it's maw wish,
Before aw gan heymn, noo, to sell maw fresh fish.
Will ye buy my fresh fish, etc.

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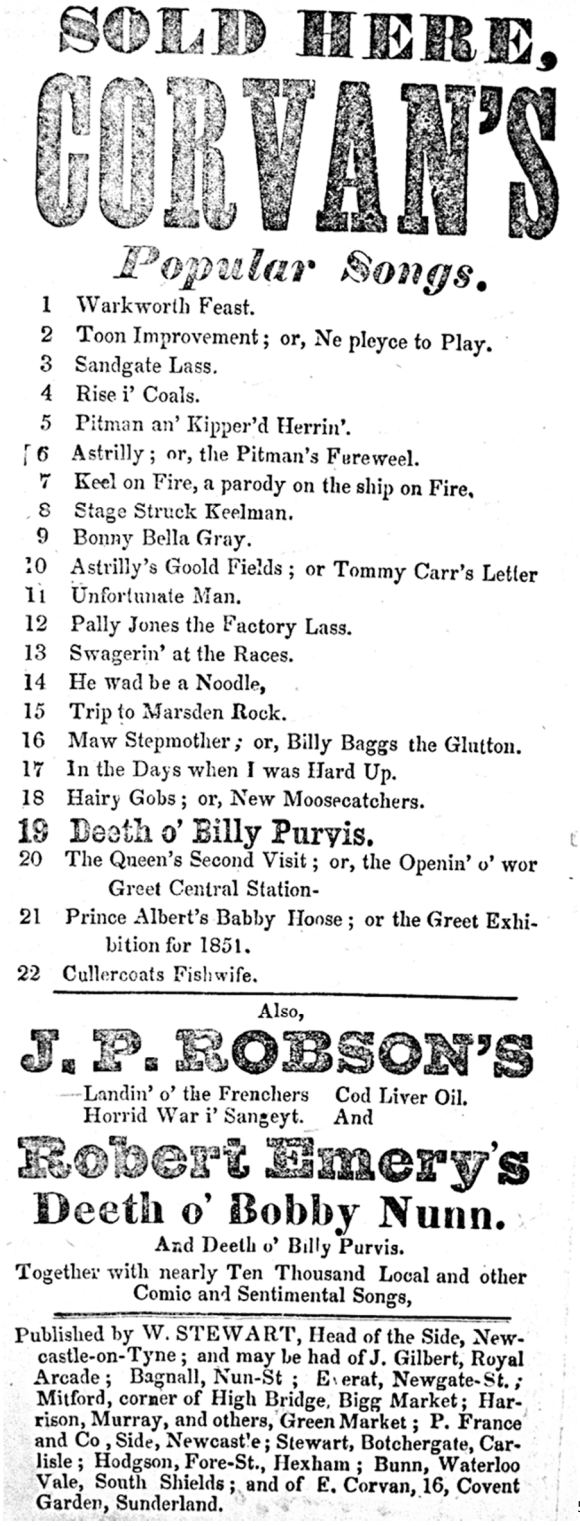


SOLD HERE,
CORVAN'S
Popular Songs.

1 Warkworth Feast.
2 Toon Improvement; or, Ne pleyce to Play.
3 Sandgate Lass.
4 Rise i' Coals.
5 Pitman an' Kipper'd Herrin'.
6 Astrilly; or, the Pitman's Fareweel.
7 Keel on Fire, a parody on the ship on Fire.
8 Stage Struck Keelman.
9 Bonny Bella Gray.
10 Astrilly's Goold Fields; or Tommy Carr's Letter
11 Unfortunate Man.
12 Pally Jones the Factory Lass.
13 Swagerin' at the Races.
14 He wad be a Noodle,
15 Trip to Marsden Rock.
16 Maw Stepmother; or, Billy Baggs the Glutton.
17 In the Days when I was Hard Up.
18 Hairy Gobs; or, New Moosecatchers.
19 Deeth o' Billy Purvis.
20 The Queen's Second Visit; or, the Openin' o' wor Greet Central Station-
21 Prince Albert's Babby Hoose; or the Greet Exhibition for 1851.
22 Cullercoats Fishwife.

Also,

J. P. ROBSON'S

Landin' o' the Frenchers
Horrid War i' Sangeyt.
Cod Liver Oil.
And

Robert Emery's
Deeth o' Bobby Nunn.

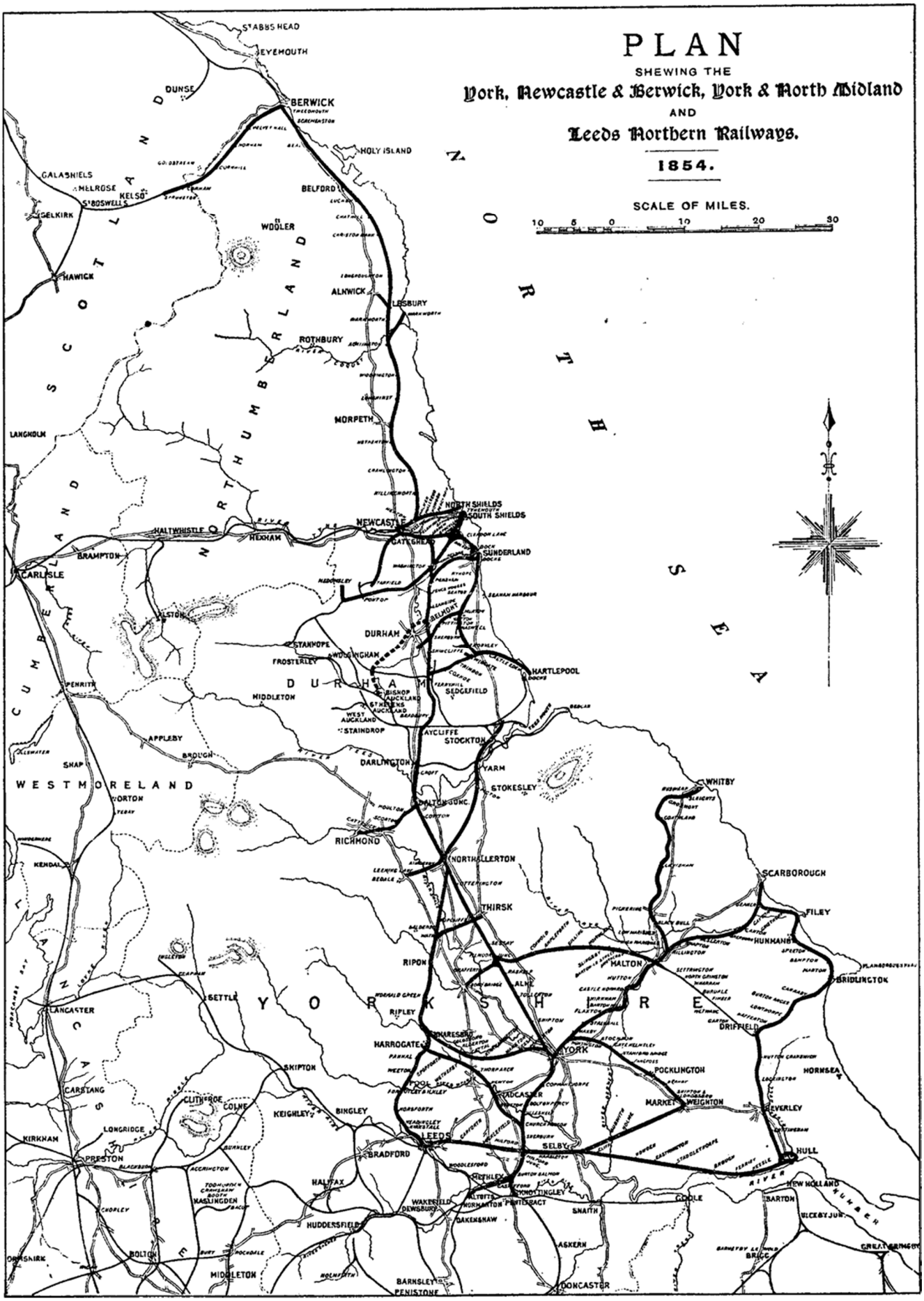
And Deeth o' Billy Purvis.

Together with nearly Ten Thousand Local and other Comic and Sentimental Songs,

Published by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle-on-Tyne; and may be had of J. Gilbert, Royal Arcade; Bagnall, Nun-St; Everat, Newgate-St.; Mitford, corner of High Bridge, Bigg Market; Harrison, Murray, and others, Green Market; P. France and Co, Side, Newcast'e; Stewart, Botchergate, Carlisle; Hodgson, Fore-St., Hexham; Bunn, Waterloo Vale, South Shields; and of E. Corvan, 16, Covent Garden, Sunderland.

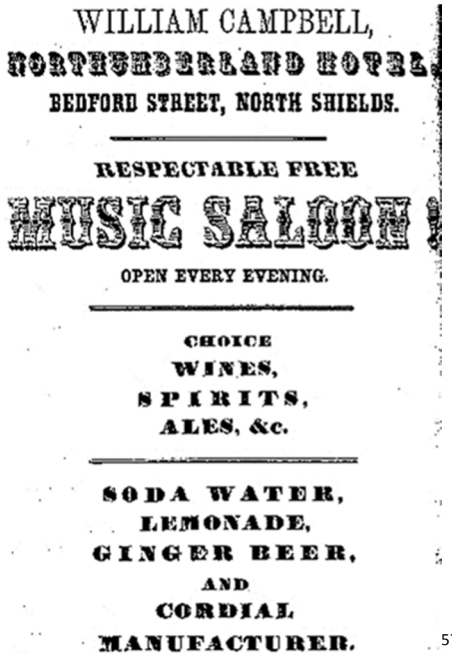
54

Covent Garden was between Sans Street and George Street in Sunderland, not far from South Dock railway station, which would be very convenient for a professional performer like Corvan, not least since the North Eastern Railway had 720 miles of track linking most major towns in the region.[55]



56

Early in 1854 William Campbell stressed the respectability of his North Shields venue in the local directory.



57

Tyneside music saloons were under pressure from the temperance lobby.

In Newcastle Robert Howard had moved from Lower Blenheim Street, near the station, to live in Clayton Street,[58] and opened a new venue. The Racket Court in Newgate Street had opened in 1822, and was 36.6 metres by almost 19 metres.[59] It was now the Royal Olympic Music Saloon and *The Era* reported that it was 'nightly crowded with respectable parties of both sexes', and would hold over 1,400, but in February there was only a 'respectable audience'. Howard claimed 'Crowded Houses nightly' to see Thomas Glen, 'the greatest Boot and Clog Dancer in the World', the Saloon was available to let. In March *The Era* noted that Balmbra had engaged 'Mr. E. Corven', the 'author of some excellent songs in the Newcastle dialect, which he sings in character, with unbounded applause'.[60] The teenager Archibald Reed visited the Wheat Sheaf and found that the concert room on the first floor 'extended nearly to Grey Street'. The stage faced west to the Cloth Market, while 'the best seats', called 'boxes', were at the front and rest were 'at a convenient price to suit the working classes'.[61]

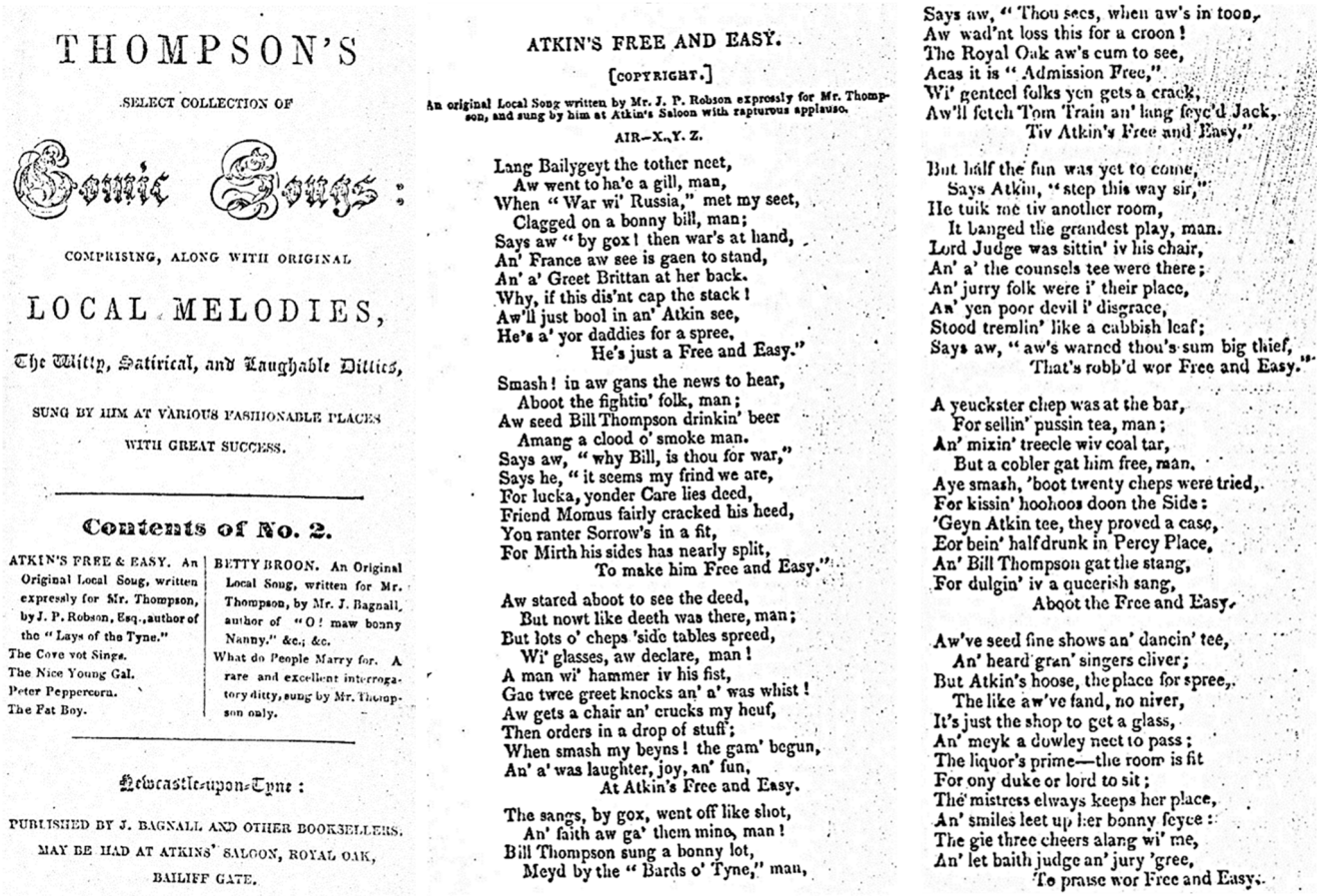
62

Balmbra 'conducted this place of amusement in a most creditable style' and Corvan was 'a great favourite'.[63]

The previous October Billy Thompson's Bee Hive Music Saloon in South Shields had burned down.

FIRE AT SOUTH SHIELDS.—On Monday morning a short time before three o'clock, the establishment of Mr Thompson, of East Holborn, South Shields, called the Bee Hive Music Saloon, was discovered to be on fire. The alarm was instantly given, and the most prompt measures were taken by the police and other parties to suppress the flames, but without effect, and in a short time the entire building was enveloped in the devouring element. The fire engines were speedily on the spot, and there being a plentiful supply of water, the fire was checked and prevented spreading, and ultimately by great exertions it was subdued about six in the morning, but not before every vestige of this place of popular resort was a mass of ruins. The origin of the fire is not known; and it is stated that Mr Thompson is partially insured. 64

Joshua Bagnall had published the first 12-page number of a songbook for Thompson in Newcastle. No copy has been traced, but the second number was probably on sale after the tsar sent 80,000 troops into the Ottoman Emperor's territory and the British and French governments declared war on Russia in March 1854. Judge and Jury Clubs were common,[65] and the Royal Oak had a room where self-appointed 'magistrates' charged others with having sex with prostitutes in the Side, Atkin of being 'half drunk in Percy Place' and Thompson with singing a risqué song. J.P. Robson used Mitford's old tune of *XYZ* for *Atkin's Free and Easy*, but his lyrics were fatalistic about the war.



THOMPSON'S

SELECT COLLECTION OF

Comic Songs:

COMPRISING, ALONG WITH ORIGINAL

LOCAL MELODIES,

The Witty, Satirical, and Laughable Ditties,

SUNG BY HIM AT VARIOUS FASHIONABLE PLACES

WITH GREAT SUCCESS.

Contents of No. 2.

ATKIN'S FREE & EASY. An Original Local Song, written expressly for Mr. Thompson, by J. P. Robson, Esq., author of the "Lays of the Tyne."
The Cove yot Sings.
The Nice Young Gal.
Peter Peppercorn.
The Fat Boy.

BETTY BROON. An Original Local Song, written for Mr. Thompson, by Mr. J. Bagnall, author of "O! maw bonny Nanny." &c.; &c.
What do People Marry for. A rare and excellent interrogatory ditty, sung by Mr. Thompson only.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

PUBLISHED BY J. BAGNALL AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS.
MAY BE HAD AT ATKINS' SALOON, ROYAL OAK,
BAILIFF GATE.

ATKIN'S FREE AND EASY.

[COPYRIGHT.]

An original Local Song written by Mr. J. P. Robson expressly for Mr. Thompson, and sung by him at Atkin's Saloon with rapturous applause.

AIR—X. Y. Z.

Lang Bailygeyt the tother neet,
Aw went to ha'e a gill, man,
When "War wi' Russia," met my seet,
Clagged on a bonny bill, man;
Says aw "by gox! then war's at hand,
An' France aw see is gaen to stand,
An' a' Greet Brittan at her back.
Why, if this dis'nt cap the stack!
Aw'll just bool in an' Atkin see,
He's a' yor daddies for a spree,
He's just a Free and Easy."

Smash! in aw gans the news to hear,
Aboot the fightin' folk, man;
Aw seed Bill Thompson drinkin' beer
Amang a clood o' smoke man.
Says aw, "why Bill, is thou for war,"
Says he, "it seems my frind we are,
For lucka, yonder Care lies deed,
Friend Momus fairly cracked his heed,
Yon ranter Sorrow's in a fit,
For Mirth his sides has nearly split,
To make him Free and Easy."

Aw stared aboot to see the deed,
But nowt like deeth was there, man;
But lots o' cheps 'side tables spreed,
Wi' glasses, aw declare, man!
A man wi' hammer iv his fist,
Gae twee greet knocks an' a' was whist!
Aw gets a chair an' crucks my heuf,
Then orders in a drop of stuff;
When smash my beyns! the gam' begun,
An' a' was laughter, joy, an' fun,
At Atkin's Free and Easy.

The sangs, by gox, went off like shot,
An' faith aw ga' them mine, man!
Bill Thompson sung a bonny lot,
Meyd by the "Bards o' Tyne," man,
Says aw, "Thou sees, when aw's in toon,
Aw wad'nt loss this for a croon!
The Royal Oak aw's cum to see,
Acas it is "Admission Free,"
Wi' genteel folks yen gets a crack,
Aw'll fetch Tom Train an' lang feyc'd Jack,
Tiv Atkin's Free and Easy."

But half the fun was yet to come,
Says Atkin, "step this way sir,"
He tuik me tiv another room,
It banged the grandest play, man.
Lord Judge was sittin' iv his chair,
An' a' the counsels tee were there;
An' jurry folk were i' their place,
An' yen poor devil i' disgrace,
Stood tremlin' like a cabbish leaf;
Says aw, "aw's warned thou's sum big thief,
That's robb'd wor Free and Easy."

A yeuckster chep was at the bar,
For sellin' pussin tea, man;
An' mixin' treecle wiv coal tar,
But a cobler gat him free, man.
Aye smash, 'boot twenty cheps were tried,
For kissin' hoohoos doon the Side:
'Geyn Atkin tee, they proved a case,
For bein' half drunk in Percy Place,
An' Bill Thompson gat the stang,
For dulgin' iv a quceish sang,
Aboot the Free and Easy.

Aw've seed fine shows an' dancin' tee,
An' heard gran' singers cliver;
But Atkin's hoose, the place for spree,
The like aw've fand, no niver,
It's just the shop to get a glass,
An' meyk a dowley neet to pass;
The liquor's prime—the room is fit
For ony duke or lord to sit;
The mistress elways keeps her place,
An' smiles leet up her bonny feyce:
The gie three cheers alang wi' me,
An' let baith judge an' jury 'gree,
To praise wor Free and Easy.

The comment that Mrs Atkin 'elways keeps her place' illustrated Robson's attitude to women.[66]

In May *Newcastle As It Is*, *reviewed in its moral aspects, social state and sanitary condition*, claimed that 10,000 male workers spent an average of 3s a week on alcohol and 2s of it on Saturday nights.

> Musical Saloons connected with the public houses are of limited extent in Newcastle … yet the moral influence of such as there are, is confessedly bad on the class of persons who are in the habit attending them. The evils of such entertainments are, that they blend the fascinations of music, with the meretricious decorations of artistic skill, and the pernicious influences of intoxicating liquor ought not to be overlooked; the changing aspects of society, the decline of the traffic, and the competition of the trade, have obliged a certain class of publicans to have recourse to these expedients to support their existing establishments; and though they may, in some degree, have increased the evils of society, the very necessity which obliged them to turn caterers to the amusements of the public, is an indication of the advance of the times. And so soon as the demand for such entertainments becomes sufficiently general, means and modes will be found to supply it, of a purer character, free from the debasement of strong drink and the allurements to vice; and under superior arrangements, the publican's traffic and attractions shall cease, being out-manoeuvred in his own devices, and out-done by the requirements of an improved public taste, and an advanced state of moral feeling.[67]

The anonymous author was James Rewcastle, and teetotallers distributed copies throughout Northumberland and Durham, [68] particularly on Tyneside, and in Newcastle above all, but Sunderland and Wearside had a growing working-class population who needed entertainment, and there were thousands of skilled workers who could afford to pay for it.

Almost all of Wearside shipwrights had joined trade unions by 1850.[69] In the 50 years to 1851 Sunderland's population had grown from 26,000 to 70,000 and the port exported almost two million tons of coal that year.[70] The magistrates renewed John Metcalf's music saloon alcohol licence on condition that it closed on weekdays if there was a service in the neighbouring Corn Market chapel,[71] which the saloon had originally been part of, and could accommodate almost 2,000. In August 1852 the Lyceum Theatre opened in Lambton Street,[72] and in September Mr R. Randall's Arcade Promenade Concert Hall was open every evening with a company that had recently been engaged in Newcastle, and it was 'nightly crowded' in October.[73] That year *Loftus*, which was to carry iron-ore from Cleveland to the Wear, was the first iron-hulled ship launched there.[74] In January 1853 shipyard owners sought to establish a Board of Conciliation with the shipwrights' union, but the owners formed a separate association in November.[75] That year 40 Wear yards produced a third of British shipping, worth £1 million.[76] In May 1854 Mr Clark engaged artistes for the Royal Arcade who had been performing at the Spread Eagle Concert Hall in Kingsland Road.[77] Corvan would have visited Sunderland with Billy Purvis, and had probably travelled by train to perform there solo, so it made sense to settle in the town.

7. Corvan's Song Books

Thomas Thompson, the son of a Bishopwearmouth shoemaker, had become a 'Printer Compositor' by 1851, when he was 21. By summer 1854 he also sold books at 11 High Street in Sunderland,[1] and he printed *A Collection of Local Songs and Recitations, illustrative of the language and manners of 'The Sons o' Tyne and Wear'* for Edward Corvan. The quotation on the cover from Mark Akenside about a 'cold fastidious judge' suggests that Corvan may have fallen foul of a Tyneside judge of one kind or another, and his *Address To The Sons O' Tyne and Wear* showed his awareness of his dependence on working men.

Address

TO THE SONS O' TYNE AND WEAR.

ONCE more I lay before you my humble endeavours to amuse, and return you my sincere thanks for the increasing kindness you have evinced towards me, by your generous patronage, during my career as a Composer and Singer of Tyneside Comic Songs: kindness, I assure you, of which I shall ever be proud, and make it my study to deserve. Trusting that you will not criticise too harshly, and that I may be the means of enlivening a dull hour, I bid you all adieu for the present, and remain

Your humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

The first of 'Corvan's Comic and Sentimental Songs', *Perils of the Mine*, was a recitation in 'standard English'.

'TWAS morn, and the sunshine beamed forth o'er the earth,
And all nature rejoiced in another day's birth,
When the cheerful and hard-working collier awoke,
And prepared for their labour, as the day-light had broke.
Merry and hearty, they bend their way on—
Some whistling, some joking, some singing a song.
All the cares of this world seemed forgot as they laughed,
And eagerly hurried along to the shaft.

Far down in the earth they sink from the sight,
To toil for their bread, void of heavenly light;
To face damp and blast—'tis hard-earned thrift,
O how little they know this will be their last shift.
See, see, how they toil, their bones how they cramp,
By the dim-burning light of a "Safe Davy lamp;"
For their homes O what hardships resigned they endure,
They've nought left but slaving, their wages are poor.

In the midst of their labour the fire-damp and blast
Has caught them, and, heavens! "their souls they have past
To their Maker." How fearful! 'tis sad, sad, to thole,
E're a sinner can utter a prayer for his soul.
Then hurry and bustle, not a word, not a breath,
They bring to the day-light this sad scene of death;
Then mothers and wives and children flock there—
Oh! how anxious they're watching in silence and prayer.

The bodies are brought up, all mangled and torn,
O who would have thought it, to see them that morn:
Not a feature now right,—burnt black as the sloes—
Friend cannot tell friend, except by the clothes.
Thus the poor honest collier oft sinks with the dead,
Cut off in his prime as he toils for his bread;
O ye that are wealthy, though he was your slave,
There's one that will take him and watch o'er his grave. [2]

The inverted commas around 'Safe Davy Lamp' show that Corvan understood that overmen sent men into dangerous seams with Humphrey Davy's lamp, and his lyrics ressembled the songs by striking miners and their wives during the 1844 strike.[3]

The Beggar Girl's Petition, castigated the hypocrisy of rich women who professed to be Christians, and though Corvan was only 26, his *Lines on Christmas* were morbidly concerned with death.

'Tis cold, cold and damp, the snow's falling fast,
And my cheeks they are blue with the cold bitter blast.
I breathe on my fingers, so red and so thin,
To warm them, though cold is my life-blood within.
They say they can't help me, and send me away,
How hard must their hearts be—ungenerous clay;
More cold than the wind or the keen drifting snow
Are the hearts of the rich to poor creatures in woe.

O pity my fate, through the world I must roam,
A poor friendless girl, without kindred or home;
Let me warm my cold feet, dear lady, I crave,
And spare me awhile from my last home, the grave;
O shelter me, then, let me stand by the fire,
I've nought, save my thanks, your reward shall be higher;
See the snow how it's melting on each glossy curl,
So prithee have pity on a poor Beggar Girl.

Again has old Christmas his joys lavished out,
And silenced awhile the loud jocund shout,
That still seems to echo the same joyous laugh
Of friendship that reigned as our cups we did quaff;
Again has the "shake-hands" of friends passed away,
That essence of feeling, like the sun's twinkling ray,
And left us reflections, whose dark shades impart
A thousand endearments that cling to the heart;
Yet all this is past, and right onward we steer
Through this dark world of trouble, year after year,
Till death's bony touch winds up our frail life,
And sinks in oblivion our sorrows and strife.

The narrator of *The Pitman's Dream of Billy's Deeth* fell asleep after work, probably wearing his *hoggers* (footless stockings).

Aws warrant thou's heard some queerish teyls, but
noo draw thaw lugs near,
An' aw'l estonish yor weak ideas, the time we get
wor beer;
Thou need'nt laugh, aw's nae aud wife, tho' queer
maw story seems
Ye'll mebies say, afore aw's dune, strange warnings
come wi' dreams.
Tired and weary, across wor hearth yene neet aw fell
asleep,
An', smash maw hoggers, sic strange thoughts i' maw
poor brains did creep.
Aw dreamt aw saw awd Billy dee, and sair, sair, lads,
aw felt it,
Aw bubbled like a sookin' bairn, maw heart 'twas
awmeyst melted;
He had his snuff box in his paws, aw seed him luik
an' smile,
Then teyk a pinch, an' scrub his beek, his moments
to beguile;
He bid his Acrons aw fareweel, the happy days he'd
hadden
At hoppins,' fairs, and country feasts, that yence his
soul did gladden.
Aw heard him say "fareweel, nae mair will aw maw
bundle steal—
Nae mair aw'll cheer 'Northumbria's Sons,' dash,
man, aw liked them weel,
For deeth, that teykes us off i' turns, has called on
yor awd friend;
An' aw my hocus pocus tricks and games are at an end.
Nae mair upon maw ootside stage aw'll stand wi'
kingly pride,
To call the wives an' Geordies in to visit maw backside;
Nae mair aw'll tune maw favourite pipes, nae mair maw
strains thou'll hear,
Nae mair aw'll joke wi' Tyneside friends, nor worldly
troubles fear;
For Billy's fairly conquered noo, maw storm of life's
gone past,
An' aw maw good deeds, wi' the bad, have sunk wi'
me at last."

'Aws gaen," he cried, "aw'm fairly corked, 'tis thus
the curtain falls,
Aw cannot stay, fareweel to all, 'tis awd king deeth
who calls."
His spirit fled, a sudden noise burst oot wi' mony a
rattle,
Wi' gongs an' drums, yeyn wad hae thought awd
Billy dee'd i' battle;
An' frae the cloods twa fairies drop't wi' sic a bonny
croon,
They laid it on awd Billy's heed, sayin' "Hail North-
umbria's Cloon!"
Aw heard yeyn say, "thors warse than thou, we'll
teyk him up to hiven,
Where aw his sins an follies past, aws sure i'll be for-
given."
Just then soft music with the breeze flowed on so
calm and sweet,
Playin' a solemn "playhoose tune" till Billy's oot
o' seet.
Struck iv a heap, aw scratched maw heed, maw bluid
gat queer and chilly,
To see the fairies i' the skies teyke off maw awd friend
Billy;
Thinks aw thou'll get a canny birth, but sair thou'll
be lamented,
For neyn could send the Geordies heym like Billy,
sae contented.
Yor neym in future days will leve, for every Tyne-
side tongue
Will tell droll tales o' Billy's days, an' hoo his fame
yence rung.
Bairns 'ill gather round the nuiks on mony a wintry
night,
To listen awd folks tell yor jokes wi pleasure and
delight.
Aw this I thought, and spake as weel, still geyping
on the skies;
When Mally gov's a sudden shake, crying Jim, maw
hinny, rise—
Awd Billy Purvis hes geyne deed: nae mair, maw
man, thou'll see him;
And since that neet aw've oftens tried to heve another
dream.

p

Corvan reused four of his favourite tunes for *The High-Level and the Aud Bridge*, plus a 'Chaunt' and *The Keel Row*.

AIR—*Butterfly.*

Yen cawd winter's neet, man, the leetnin was flashn',
The wind through the High-Level Bridge lood did
squeel;
The neet 'twas pick-dark, then, an' the waves they
were dashing—
We'd sair tues amang us to manage the keel;
But amang aw the thunner what meyde us aw woner,
Was the High-Level Bridge to the Awd Bridge
bawl oot—

HIGH-LEVEL.

AIR—*Marble Halls.*

O, ye crazy awd bridge ye'll suen be pull'd doon,
An yor steyns i' the river be hurl'd;
Yor nae ornament noo, but disgrace in wor toon—
Luik at me, aws the pride o' the world;
Hoo noble am I towerin' up to the sky,
Luikin doon on a nuisance below.
There's yor blind men and cadgers stopping folks
passin by,
An' yor Pipergate wives wi' their jaw.

SPOKEN—Wad heart o' man believed, as Billy Shakespear says i' the tragedy o' "Reed Barns," twe bridges fight. Blow me tight, Jacky Gilroy was thuner-struck. Aw thought some Russian man-o'-war was tryin to blaw them beyth up. Goggle-eyed Tommy and P. D. dors'nt peep oot the huddock, but kept crying oot, "Skipper, run her ashore, run her ashore." They beyth pop't thor heeds oot at last to see where we whar; an' just as P. D. gat his heed fairly abune the huddock, thinks aw, aw's stop thaw shootin, so aw nailed him on the scap wi' the heel o' yen o' Billy Thompson's Mackey Buits, No. 1000, Back-row, an' doon he drop't as quiet as a beyne, wi' four pund o' beef on't. We passed the Meadows' Hoose, near'd the Cat's Arse, hail'd the Cruds and Cream Hoose, and pop't by Skinner Burn, an' the twe bridges pull'd off thor neetcaps to fight. Goggle-eyed Tommy fainted; as for me aw said aw'd second the Awd Bridge, crying "the blue steyn forivor." Then aw hears the High-Level say te the Awd Bridge, "Prince Albert crossed me—there's a honour." What an idea. Prince Albert's nae better than ony other man; aw mean to say ane man's as good as another, an' a d—sight better. He's had the meazles, aw've had the measles, so wat's the difference? The only difference aw can see is, he rides for nought, and sic as me hes to pay for his ride. They'll let him cross the High-Level for nought, because he's weel of, but they'll charge me a happenny, cause aw's poor—but what's the odds. The keel-man iv his huddock, an' the prince iv his palace, stands the seym chance for a good berth i' the next world. That's a kittler. The High-Level may jaw aboot his honours, but iv awd age is a honour, the High-Level may shut up. But, man alive, see'st thou, just as a silly quesin i' this manner, the Awd Bridge opened oot upon the High-Level i' this style—

AWD BRIDGE.

AIR—*Fine Old English Gentleman.*

"Shut up, shut up thaw skinny jaws," the Awd
Bridge then did shoot,
"For if thou's young, Mister Level Bridge, just
mind what thou's aboot;
And dinnet wag thaw jaws ower fast like the men o'
modern days,
But tayke advice frev a poor Awd Bridge, and drop
off all self-praise.

CHORUS.

"Just mind yor locomotive things, an' let an
Awd Bridge be."

"Thou says aw's crazy—why, what odds? thou's
young an' hes nae sense;
Awve had my day, an' thou'll ha' thine, but not sic
times to mense,
For every thing is changed; but noo to me its like a
dream
I' pick-dark neets, to see the leets fleein' ower my
heed by steam."

Just mind, &c.

"Wor Castlegarth, where snips and snobs an' maw
awd frinds did meet,
Thou's caused to be pull'd doon, thor neymes are
banished oot o' seet;—
Luik doon on me, Lang-sparrow-shanks, ye half-bred,
mean young pup,
If ye thraw yor engines doon on me aw'll thraw
some awd keels up."

Just mind, &c.

"Afore iver ye were thought ov, aw've stood here i' my pride,
An' better folks walk'd ower frae the Bottle-bank an' Side;
Besides ye charge a happenny, yor Level's dearly bought—
Aw can stand my grund as firm as thou, an' let folks cross for nought."

Just mind, &c.

'When aw was young we had nae jails or bastiles i' the toon,
Nor police wi' thor great big staffs to knock a poor soul doon;
But noo the march-o'-intellect an' scientific ways,
Hes tune away wor good awd times—noo we sigh for better days."

Just mind, &c.

HIGH-LEVEL.

AIR—*Yankee Doodle.*

"Bastiles for sic as thou, awd cock, my friends they did invent, sirs—
Aw just been thinkin i' maw mind its time we had thou sent, sirs;
We ken thou hes nea rogueish ways i' thaw mind to bewail, sirs."
But stop yor noisy jaw te neet, or aw'l pop thou into jail, sirs.
By sic as thou aw'l not be crossed, but te this grand point aw'l stick, sirs;
Aw's meyde o' solid steyn an' iron, so aw'l fight thou like a brick, sirs."

AWD BRIDGE.

"Noo Hudson crossed ye sair enough, the Railway King aw ment, sirs,
Walked ower ye fine, ye tuck the huff, an' stop't his movement, sirs;
Tayke care, maw man, aw'l tan thaw hide, maw orange wives can pelt thee,
An' cobblers frae the Garth an' Side we leather straps will pelt thee."

HIGH-LEVEL. (X.Y.Z.)

The High-Level gat i' sic a rage, an' bawled oot stop yor keels then.
Igox, says aw, te Jack Gilroy, we'l niver git te Sheels then.
Stop yor keels, he cries agayne, or else aw'l drop ye wiv a steyne.
Doon on yor shanks an' teyk an oath, or, blow me tight, aws sink ye both.
Lord hae marcy on us aw, the P. D. bawls oot belaw;
Swear ought, skipper, doon aw drops, an' hinny, marrows niver stops;
But there aw stuck upon my knees, cryin oot aw'l swear just what ye please,
Grand Mr. High-Level Bridge, man.

SPOKEN—The Awd Bridge twigged us get through the High-Level, and then another row began.

CHAUNT.

Is that the way ye desart an' awd frind, ye skippers o' thor keels,
Swear ye'll own nae bridge but me, or niver nae mair will ye teyke yor coals to Sheels.
What's that, says the High-Level, ye fond awd feuil, de ye think aw's a flat—
Ye disagreeable, wizen-feyced, shaky awd sulky, awd son iv a cat.
Gan on wiv yor keels, niver mind that awd feuil.
Says the Awd Bridge, ye'd better stop;
Attempt to move another stroke, an' doon upon yor blessed beyns aw'l drop.

SPOKEN—Dear knaws hoo far they migh a' geyne, but just as they were gannin to hev a regular had, twe police com in **seet, and beyth the bridges shut up for the neet. Jack Gilroy and me gat set through as the stars was biddin yen anothers good neet. Day-leet was breakin,' and as the sun peep'd oot wor hearts gat warm, and we sung aw the way doon to Sheels.**

In spite of the 'march-o'-intellect' and 'scientific ways', most of humanity had to carry on doing the hard work.

Advice to Young Men was in 'standard' English, and set to *John Jones*, but most of it was patter.

A young man that is wishful to enter society
Must learn to conduct himself with propriety;
Be very polite, and always respectable;
His manners refined, and never neglectable.
Tho people may chaff him, he ne'er musdeist str himself,
But take it all cooly, and while they address yourself,
Don't blush like a booby, for, if bashful, pray mend in it—
That's my advice, and you'll find me your friend in it.

For manners are esteemed in all kinds of society,
And will make a man's fortune, if done with propriety;
For in this world, if we like, we'll ne'er blush with shame in it,
But happily live, and die with a good name in it.

SPOKEN—Yes, gentlemen, very seldom I attempt to give advice to young men; yet I think it my duty to let them know their faults, as well as their perfections. Now, how many sorts of young men are there? Let me see—there's the country bumpkin, with his honest heart and simple ways; then the man of the town, that knows everything and thinks everybody knows nothing; then we have the dandy, or fop, that is the foolish species of young-uns; then we have young men who ape the gentlemen, and who come it so strong, that they appear as ridiculous in society as a monkey in a straight jacket. Imagine one of the latter coming into a parlour where a party of well-bed ladies and gents have met; as soon as he enters the door he attempts to make a bow, and in doing so his **stick gets between his legs and throws him down amongst their feet amid roars and screams of laughter; he gets up with a face like the setting sun; puts his hand behind and feels he has split his breeches, commences to make an apology, and in doing so drops his hat, and while stooping down to pick it up he drops his stick; then stoops for his stick and drops his hat again, treads with all his weight on an old lady's corns, who faints, and with a tremendous crash falls on poor puss, who, in revenge, scratches out the eyes of the old lady's lap-dog. If he is invited to drink tea, he is sure to take a mouthful boiling-hot, spit it out, and scald everybody's nose-end round the table. The ladies and gents pretend to pity his misfortunes, and, when trying to alleviate his sufferings, wish he was at the devil. His mouth being scalded, causes his tongue to rest, tho' his eyes roll about in seeming agony; and, if anybody laughs, he pretends to forget his sufferings, and laughs louder than they. At dinner he is worse, as he has more to do, for when he commences to carve, he is sure to miss the joint, then in trying to cut through the bone, cuts the dish in two, and sends the gravy and sauce flying about in all directions. He is sure to have his elbows in other gentlemen's plates, picks his teeth with his fork, and when rising up to drink the health of the party, his head comes in contact with the chandelier, the former being thick, unfortunately breaks the glasses, at the same time the worthy host wishes he had broke his head. When he is drinking he coughs in the glass, and besprinkles every gent's shirt breast in the room; then beginning with his funny tricks, laughs at what he says—commences to tell a story, and breaks down half way, with "I've forgot the rest," &c.—snuffs his nose, sucks his teeth, makes faces, and if he has a pair of boots on, shoves his legs on the table to let the company see them. He never knows where to put his hands, and when going down stairs forgets he has any legs, and generally falls to the bottom—makes an apology to the landlady, although, at the same time, he has nearly broken his neck. This, gentlemen, is the effect of awkwardness, and I must tell you that all young gentlemen looking after the ladies, and even the common every day transactions through life, if you wish to get on must practice quite the reverse—

For manners, &c.

Now in courting the girls, if a gent should be young at it,
He's sure to succeed, if he's got a smooth tongue at it;
For ladies are deep, and quite comprehensible—
Its not always good looks they want, but a man that is sensible.

Always be manly, civil, and affable;
Carefully avoiding appearances laughable;
Thus, if you follow a girl, and cannot succeed with her,
Why go to another, and never mind heeding her.

Spoken—Yes, gentlemen, ladies are cunning creatures to deal with; the more you keep away from them the more they will follow you—being quite the reverse, the other way. The more you follow them, the more they will keep away form you. 'Tis a woman's nature to be contrary. They are also very careful in their choice. Now I know very well sensible young girls hate a man that is eternally boaring them with presents; also young men that cannot use their tongues in a nice, subdued, flattering style. Now, for instance, a young man sweethearting a girl, and using such expressions as "O, how lovely you seem my duck and green peas," as if she was something to eat or a candy-stick to suck at; and who is always boaring those in his company with "all so gay," and "all serene"—"has your mother sold her mangle"—"does your mother know you'r out"—"O, George, my mother's coming down the passage"—"pickles"—"hook it"—"how's Miss Thing-i'-me-rigg"—"me and Bill Thing-im-bob walloped a policeman last night." Such young men are disgusting in the eyes of the fair sex. If a young man wishes to succeed in courtship, he must come it in this style. (Appears quite modest.) Hem! hem! Very fine evening miss. I hope you won't be offended at my taking the liberty of intruding upon your privacy, but really your company is so agreeable that I am ever wishing to benefit myself by courting the society of those that are superior to my humble self. I hope you will consider the attraction which brings me here as a fitting apology for my boldness. (Spoken aside; a blush comes over her face.) The atmosphere is clear; the trees are gently waving in the breeze; everything seems charming, and yet there is a want—'tis you, my love, my life—the only flower that bloometh—without which to me the world would be a desert, or a potato garden, growing cucumbers and German sausages! therefore, lean upon my arm, and let us wander forth in love's embrace; and as your sweet breath adds perfume to the breeze, I will treat you to a halfpenny black-pudding! Then, while masticating, we may gaze on nature's temple—the golden yellow corn, the potato crops—for the large potatoes will be the biggest this year—and as the evening closes o'er us thou wilt be mine."—"Ax my mother—yes, I'll be thine."

For manners, &c.

Never show yourself off as something superior
To people beneath you, of humble exterior;
Remember it is not to a man's clothes you address yourself,
But the man that is in them, therefore do not distress yourself.
Ne'er expose a man's faults, but act with due modesty;
Judge the world by yourself, and you'll manage some honesty.
Assist a poor friend, if you think he is needing it—
Then a fig for the world, you needn't mind heeding it.
For manners are esteemed in all grades of society,
And will make a man's fortune, if done with propriety.
So I'll finish my song as I intended it,
And I hope your applause will act like a friend in it.

The references to 'cucumbers', 'German sausages' and a 'black pudding' may have provided an opportunity for bawdiness.

Corvan revised *Tyne Lads for Ever* to praise the Tyneside skiff-builder Harry Clasper and the sculler James Candlish for the latter's victory over the 'Cocknies' a year earlier, and he presumably still sang it to *Susan of the Valley*.

Aw's a jolly young keelman, sirs, a son o' 'Coaly Tyne.'
An' mony a spree aw've had, sirs, wi' friends both true and kine.
Aw luived maw marrows dearly, 'sides aws fondish o' maw beer;
An', tho' oft aw may seem queerly, when drunk, straight heyme aw steer.

Singing—Fal the dal, the dal, lal le, 'Tyne lads for ever;
Fal the dal, the dal, la le 'Tyne lads for ever.

All day we wark and sing, lads, wi' hearts sae blythe and free;
All discontent we fling, lads, when we get o' the spree
An' tho' we're looked on lightly, wor hearts they're true and leel,
We're brave, we're bold, were sprightly, aye, an' honest when we deal.

Chorus—Singing, &c.

We smoke, we dance, we drink, lads, we wark hard for wor bread;
We sing, we joke an' think, lads, o' frin's that's lang geyn deed;
We've arms, we've legs, we've brains, lads, better than mony a king,
An' tho' we hae, nae worldly gains, we're happy when we sing.

Chorus—Singing, &c.

Noo we've geen the Cocknies gliffs, lads, we've let them ken wor worth;
Wiv Harry Clasper bildin' skiffs, an' Candlish in the north;
Jim, 'ill suen be aw their daddies, he pulls along sae fine,
He'll meyke the Cocknies twist thor jaws, wor champion o' the Tyne.

Chorus—Singing, &c.

To be the King of England aw wad'nt give a scuddock,
Awd suener leve o' breed an' cheese and smoke doon i' my huddock;
Awd suener teyke maw raggy drawers, clean weshed doon frae the line,
Then wear a pair o' goolden breeks to be yor King o' Tyne.

Spoken—There's an independent mind for ye; and as lang asw a can keep the awd keel afloat an' raise my beer, aw'l sing—

Fal the dal, &c.

An' for parlyments an' pollysticks wi' that aw've nout to de;
As lang as aw can raise the brass to get upon the spree,
Aw'l smoke my pipe contented, so a'l yor sweethearts bring
To wor greet big Olympic, an' help me for to sing—

Fal the dal, the dal, lal le Tyne lads forever, &c.

Corvan knew Wear shipyard owners were not 'janick' (fair) to shipwrights. *Carpenters' Strike* praised the men who had won a pay rise, but also exhorted them to support the apprentices and their entertainer.

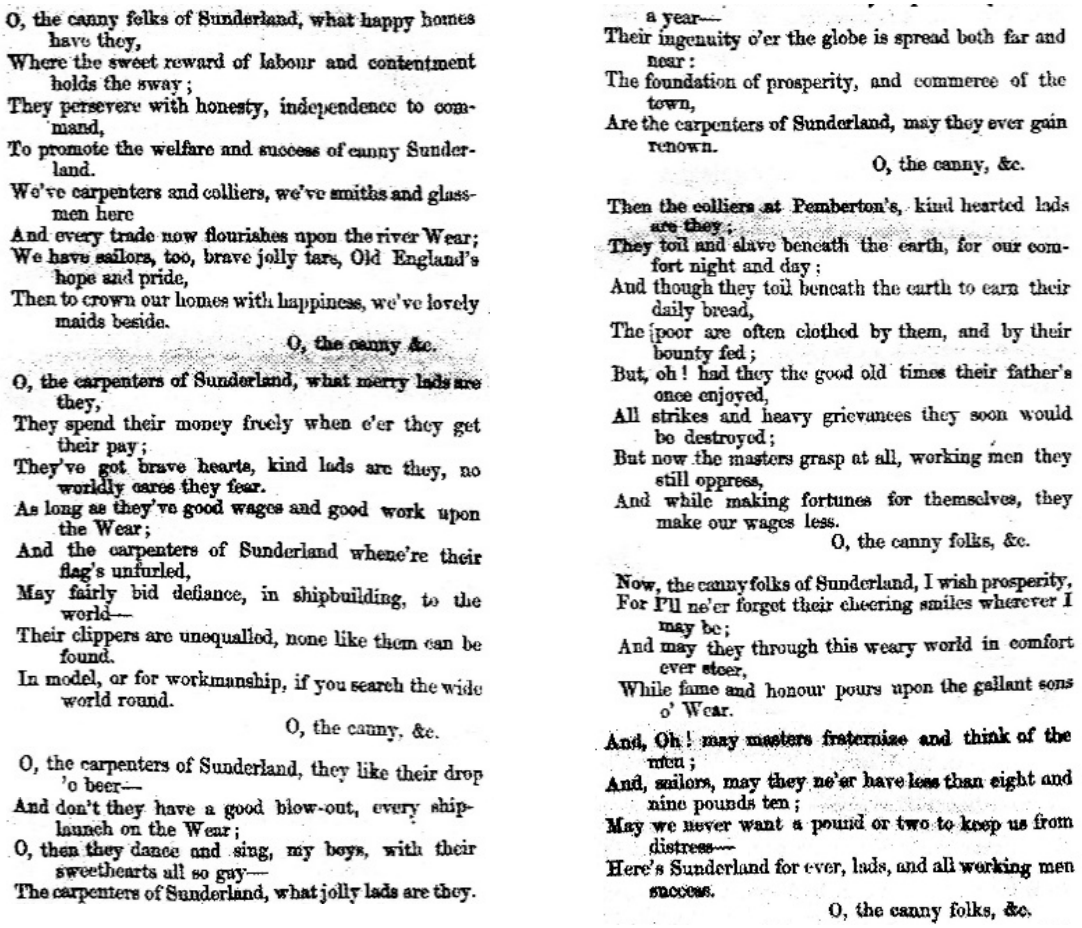
Lads, aw's gannin' to sing 'boot the carpenters strike,
For they've got the six shillings, an' that's what they like;
Shipbuilders they're coinin', so its nobbet fair-play,
To give the men 'looance an' six shillings a day—
Thor devlish good men, they suen meyk a stick,
Thor up tiv aw dodges, gosh, they'll nail an odd trick—
Dash, the Sunderland shipwrights they've proved themselves bricks,
For they've chiped out their wages by making their sticks.

Gosh, chaps, efter this what fine fun we'll see,
Ship carpenters noo they'll not care for a spree,
For on cuddys an' cabs ti wark they'll aw ride,
Crying six shillings a-day on wor canny Wear side;
For provisions being raised, they little will care,
As they've a shilling a day noo extra to spare—
Aws glad they've got raised, lads, its truth aw noo speak,
For they'll flock to see me on maw benefit neet.

Poor men now-a-days hes sair wark to live,
For noo double prices for aw things we give,
So its fit ye should strike yor wages to gain;
Your position as carpenters ever maintain,
An' the poor 'prentice lads ye should aw think o' them,
For their mothers' hes sair tues to fetd them at heym.
If maisters was janick, they'd gie them their dues,
An' raise them a shilling, an' find them in shoes.

But ye'll perhaps be offended if aw's o'er lang,
But aw hope ye'll excuse me if aw should be rang;
I wish ye all weel—I can wish ye no more—
Its what you've all heard me oft wish before.
May you prosper for ever in comfort and peace,
May the carpenters welfare forever increase;
May you all through this world in happiness steer,
With thirty-six shillings a week on the canny old Wear.

Corvan's tune has not been traced, and neither has that of *Merry Bells of England*, which he set for *Canny Folks o' Sunderland*.



O, the canny folks of Sunderland, what happy homes have they,
Where the sweet reward of labour and contentment holds the sway;
They persevere with honesty, independence to command,
To promote the welfare and success of canny Sunderland.
We've carpenters and colliers, we've smiths and glassmen here
And every trade now flourishes upon the river Wear;
We have sailors, too, brave jolly tars, Old England's hope and pride,
Then to crown our homes with happiness, we've lovely maids beside.
O, the canny &c.

O, the carpenters of Sunderland, what merry lads are they,
They spend their money freely when e'er they get their pay;
They've got brave hearts, kind lads are they, no worldly cares they fear.
As long as they've good wages and good work upon the Wear;
And the carpenters of Sunderland whene're their flag's unfurled,
May fairly bid defiance, in shipbuilding, to the world—
Their clippers are unequalled, none like them can be found.
In model, or for workmanship, if you search the wide world round.
O, the canny, &c.

O, the carpenters of Sunderland, they like their drop 'o beer—
And don't they have a good blow-out, every ship-launch on the Wear;
O, then they dance and sing, my boys, with their sweethearts all so gay—
The carpenters of Sunderland, what jolly lads are they.

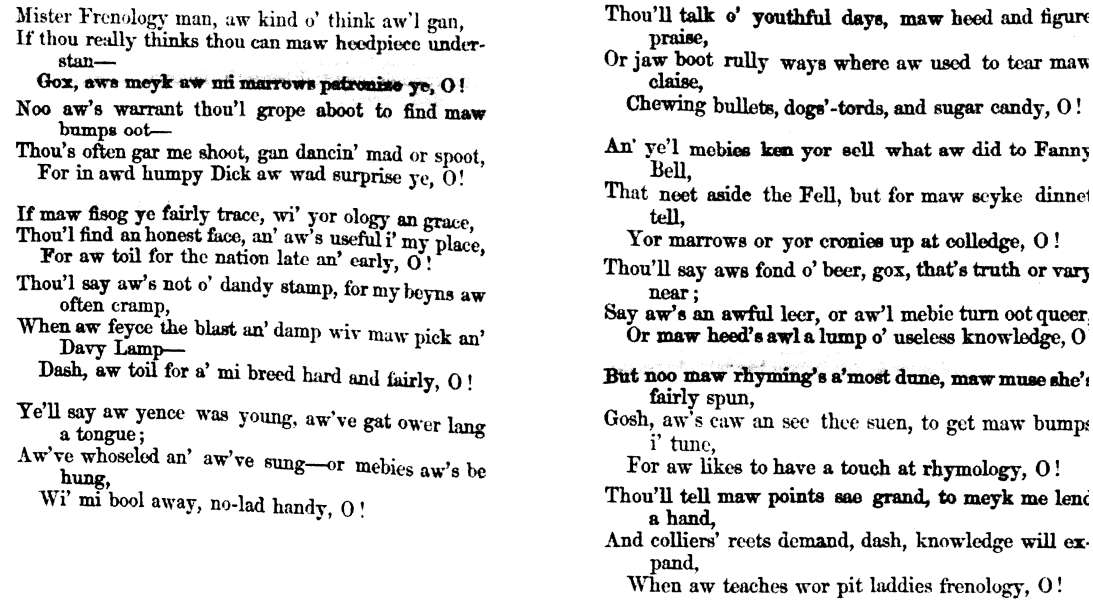
a year—
Their ingenuity o'er the globe is spread both far and near;
The foundation of prosperity, and commerce of the town,
Are the carpenters of Sunderland, may they ever gain renown.
O, the canny, &c.

Then the colliers at Pemberton's, kind hearted lads are they;
They toil and slave beneath the earth, for our comfort night and day;
And though they toil beneath the earth to earn their daily bread,
The poor are often clothed by them, and by their bounty fed;
But, oh! had they the good old times their father's once enjoyed,
All strikes and heavy grievances they soon would be destroyed;
But now the masters grasp at all, working men they still oppress,
And while making fortunes for themselves, they make our wages less.
O, the canny folks, &c.

Now, the canny folks of Sunderland, I wish prosperity,
For I'll ne'er forget their cheering smiles wherever I may be;
And may they through this weary world in comfort ever steer,
While fame and honour pours upon the gallant sons o' Wear.
And, Oh! may masters fraternize and think of the men;
And, sailors, may they ne'er have less than eight and nine pounds ten;
May we never want a pound or two to keep us from distress—
Here's Sunderland for ever, lads, and all working men success.
O, the canny folks, &c.

That inclusive 'we' suggests that Corvan would be glad of a pound or two.

Corvan set *A Collier's Letter to a Phrenologist* to the tune of *Derry Down.*



Mister Frenology man, aw kind o' think aw'l gan,
If thou really thinks thou can maw heedpiece understan—
Gox, aws meyk aw mi marrows patronize ye, O!
Noo aw's warrant thou'l grope aboot to find maw bumps oot—
Thou's often gar me shoot, gan dancin' mad or spoot,
For in awd humpy Dick aw wad surprise ye, O!

If maw fisog ye fairly trace, wi' yor ology an grace,
Thou'l find an honest face, an' aw's useful i' my place,
For aw toil for the nation late an' early, O!
Thou'l say aw's not o' dandy stamp, for my beyns aw often cramp,
When aw feyce the blast an' damp wiv maw pick an' Davy Lamp—
Dash, aw toil for a' mi breed hard and fairly, O!

Ye'll say aw yence was young, aw've gat ower lang a tongue;
Aw've whoseled an' aw've sung—or mebies aw's be hung,
Wi' mi bool away, no-lad handy, O!

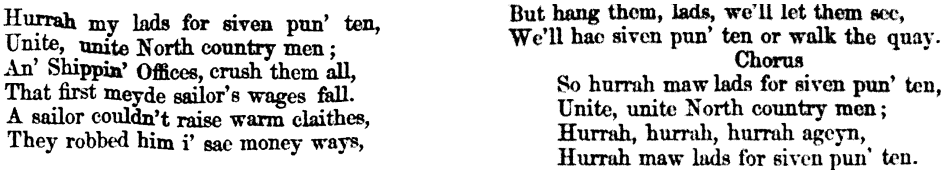
Thou'll talk o' youthful days, maw heed and figure praise,
Or jaw boot rully ways where aw used to tear maw claise,
Chewing bullets, dogs'-tords, and sugar candy, O!

An' ye'l mebies ken yor sell what aw did to Fanny Bell,
That neet aside the Fell, but for maw scyke dinnet tell,
Yor marrows or yor cronies up at colledge, O!
Thou'll say aws fond o' beer, gox, that's truth or vary near;
Say aw's an awful leer, or aw'l mebie turn oot queer,
Or maw heed's awl a lump o' useless knowledge, O

But noo maw rhyming's a'most dune, maw muse she's fairly spun,
Gosh, aw's caw an see thee suen, to get maw bumps i' tune,
For aw likes to have a touch at rhymology, O!
Thou'll tell maw points sae grand, to meyk me lend a hand,
And colliers' reets demand, dash, knowledge will expand,
When aw teaches wor pit laddies frenology, O!

Supposedly wiser heads accepted the pseudo-science of phrenology.

Corvan reworked *£4.10s*. into *The Sailors' Strike*, but used the same tune, *Zip Coon*.



Hurrah my lads for siven pun' ten,
Unite, unite North country men;
An' Shippin' Offices, crush them all,
That first meyde sailor's wages fall.
A sailor couldn't raise warm claithes,
They robbed him i' sae money ways,

But hang them, lads, we'll let them see,
We'll hae siven pun' ten or walk the quay.
Chorus
So hurrah maw lads for siven pun' ten,
Unite, unite North country men;
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah ageyn,
Hurrah maw lads for siven pun' ten.

Yor shippin' men live snug ashore,
Free from all hardships our brass they store,
While we poor sailors plough the main,
And scarce a living can we gain.
They make up fines an think we're soft,
But still the cherub sits aloft,
That smiles upon life's weary track,
And safely guides poor honest Jack.
So hurrah, &c.

What's four pun' ten for a sailor's wage,
Who risks his life where billows rage,
Who stands the perils of the sea,
To keep a wife and family?

Who up slippery shrouds must climb,
'Midst frost an' snow in winter time,
Yet owners grumble and cry oot when
A sailor wants his siven pun' ten.
So hurrah, &c.

Now all you sailors north and south,
Believe me lads I've spoke the truth,
And when ought happens in the toon,
Aw'l teyk maw pen and write it doon.
May all trades prosper in the land,
May sailors still gaw hand in hand,
May the good time come and what's best ye ken,
Aw wish the sailors thirty-eleven pun' ten.
So hurrah, &c.

Canny Jimmy Hill appeared in print, apparently for the first time.

Corvan reworked the lyrics of *Maw Stepmother or, Billy Bag the Glutton* as *The Half Starved Youth*, using the same tune, *Teetotal Society*.

Aw say, cheps, ye mon pity my case,
For misfortunes upon me keeps galloping;
Stepmother says aw's a disgrace,
While maw poor skinny doup she keeps walloping.

Maw carcish its nought else but beyns,
Aw's just like a block to keep hackin' up;
Aw's fed on lamb fry and sheep's steyns,
An' t'other day aw swallowed a bottle o' blackin' up.

O! maw stepmother uses me bad,
She says ive maw guts she's loosein' a'—
Gosh, t'other day aw nigh set her mad,
For aw eat father's breeches an' shoes an' a';
Yen day aw eat a' the claithes pegs,
Which made my stepmother unhappy quite,
Aw eat off pussy's tail an' hint legs,
For aw'd gat sic a devil of an appetite,

Yen day maw feyther an' mother fell oot,
An' the time that the twosome was wranglin',
Aw eat up some blankets an' sheets,
That feyther had just been a manglin';
Yen day aw tryed to get fat,
So aw eat a yeal pig an' sum spuds an a',
Gosh, yen day aw eat up the door mat
An' a tub full o' nice soap-sods an' a'.

Stepmother thought aw'd suen dee,
For little she knew what aw'd eaten up;
She thought the things stole, de ye see,
If she'd knawn it was me aw'd been beaten up.
Wor landlord yence com' for the rent,
An' as wor aud stairs he did hobble up,
His hat fell biv some accident—
Aw eat it! maw eyes! what a gobble up.

Iv a terrible rage he then got,
Gosh aw laughed till maw cheeks gat fat an' a',
Says he don't swallow the pant,
For you've let doon maw rent buik an' hat an' a'
Policeman, help, help, he did shoot,
I give you in charge of this guffin, sir,
He's swallowed maw hat—mind yor snoot—
He's a greedy, varocious young ruffian, sir.

Ti the station they then tuik me straight,
An' there i' the dark left me growpin' in,
Mother sent me some physic for spite,
An' tell'd them maw bowels wanted openin',
But, thinks aw, gox, aw'll match ye a' yet,
I' spite o' yor rogush ways an' a',
So aw finished wi' swallerin' up the pollis,
His staff an' blue claithes an' a'.

Corvan was evidently still not fond of matriarchal domesticity.

Billy Purvis turned Ranter Preacher, *The Happy Keelman*, *The Rise in Baccy*, *Tom Johnson*, *The New Mayor of South Shields* and *Blyth in a Bleeze* were almost unaltered from *Random Rhymes*, as was *Yer Gannin to be a Keelman*.[4]

William Wilson Murray, a bookseller, stationer and quill-dresser in Claypath, Durham, used *Yer Gannin to be a Keelman* as a model for a song,[5] and an anonymous printer produced it and another song for him on a single sheet. *Durham Militia* plagiarised Corvan's *He wad be a Noodle*, but was set to *There's nae luck about the house*, not *Ge ho Dobbin*. *The Durham Pant-Wife's Petition to the Corporation*, which was to be sung to one of Corvan's favourite tunes, *Jeanette and Jeannot*, complained about polluted water from public *pants*, and the lyrics had appeared in the *Durham Chronicle* three years earlier.[6]

Corvan reused *Jeanette and Jeannot* for *The Sunderland Volunteers*, which lampooned them in similar ways to *He wad be a Noodle*. Not all the Wearside and Tyneside characters' names appeared in full, but 'Pilgarlic' meant 'baldy'.

Twelve thousand men's noo wanted, so aw volunteered the day.
To gan an fight the Russians, and give the Turks' fair play;
Aw's quite a military man--my eyes, aw'l warm thor lugs,
Aw'l meyke greet Nicklis twist his jaws wiv his hairy-feyced humbugs,
Aw's raise a' the men aw can, gosh, aw'l hev a first-rate squad,
Wiv a few fishwives among them, to set the Russians mad.
Cud B-t-l-r's gannin' wiv us, he'll slay them aw to bits;
While Peggy W-b-n, wi' tripe, 'ill byest them into fits.
Chorus—First four lines.

We'll a' be dressed like sougers, an' we'll have a fine brass band—
Bill Oats, he'll be wor leader, fra canny Sunderland,
He'll play the jewgar i' the front, and sing wi' fifes and drums,
Then, wiv Jack the sweep for gineral, we'll wallop a' that comes.
We'll get wor awd eccentrics back, we'll raise them frae the deed,
They'll cut the Russians down like sheep, to give us cheps the lead;
Pilgarlic and the Warkhoos King, they'll rise an' fight for spree—
Lo, if they should pay wor dirty squad, they'll hae their wark to de.

SPOKEN.—Paymaw squad—Poh! Poh—nonsense. Aw'll put an end to the war mesell, if Prince Albert wasn't jealous o' maw 'bilities. Some first-rate men i' maw squad. Aw've promoted some o' the good'ns. Let me see—There's Major Clog-o'-Wood, stands fire, like a buck; Cud B-t-l-r—he'll walk into them; Jack the Sweep 'ill make a fine gineral—he walk into them; Jack the Sweep 'ill make a fine gineral—he drawed Bobby the Whosler's badger hissell, and got twe leather medals meyde o' pipeclay for his courage i' the war o' Sandgyte. He can knock down three at a time, especially a man on crutches. Curnel Jackey-Look-up, he'll ring thor lugs for them; Commander-in-Chief—that's *mesell*. Aw can de ought—fight or let it aleyne, but prefer the latter—geyne through a vast i' maw time (what? tripe an' onions, de ye say?)—been on the fiddle a week, an' spent nought—good gineralship. Been all ower the world, an' part o' Geyteshead. Aw ken hoo mony beens maks five. Had maw edication i' the jubilee, roasting taties. Aw aynce draw'd a map there—yes! an' sent a plan o' the United States o' Hell's Kitchen up to government, an' a model o' my nose to Prince Albert for a snuff-box. Aw's a natoral *genus*—fit for a military man;—knaws all about the Rooshins, the Prooshins, the French, and the *Torks*. Had a interview wi' Nichlis—thought nought o' him; teld him maw mind. "*Mr. Nick*," says aw, "what are ye making a' the noise aboot the *Moll-davy*. *Wally-wacky*, and *Dandy-ubian* prencepalities for—ye hae *nae* business *there*." He said, "*Peter the Great* prophesied the Rooshens had to conquer the world—and the first was Turkey. Aw want the Darnin-needles *(Dardenelles)*, that's the key o' the Black Sea." "Its a wonder thou dissent try to pick the lock," "Yes, aw'l stop yor Indian traffic," ses he. "Three can play at that game," ses aw—

Ten thoosand men's, &c.

Jack D—ing he'll be there, he's up tiv a' thor rigs;
He'll stick them in the jugular vein, the seyem as sticking pigs;
C—te, the butcher, he's the lad, he'll maw them doon like oats,
While B—n, the Barber, lathers them, an' efter cuts their throats;
But if a' was a' the Turks, aw'd devlish soon ha' peace,
An' fire reed-hot snaw-balls doon their throats, an' melt them like bear's grease—
For yor oil-cake men they winnet de, tho' they brag aboot their might—
Dash, when they face my dirty squad, we'll show them hoo to fight.

The self-appointed 'Commander in Chief' remains anonymous, but his boasts about recruiting veterans of 'the war o' Sandgyte' undermined the supposedly patriotic call to arms and represented another example of Corvan's contempt for British militarism.

The Folks of Aud Sheels was almost exactly the same as the version in *Random Rhymes*, but Corvan fully understood the economic and physical precariousness of workers' lives, and reused the tune associated with Burns' *A Man's a Man* for *Collier Lads*.

Aw remember weel when collier lads could sport thor brass an' a' that,
When aw used to spend a yell week pay to treat maw lass an' a' that;
An' a' this, an' a' that, aw's hard-up noo, an' a' that—
But aw dinnet care aw'l not despair, for a chep's a man for a' that.

Aw used to were fine claithes an' sport maw feyther's watch an' a' that—
Aw could fight a roond, or bet a poond, at a boolin'-match an' a' that;
An' a' this, an' a' that, good times they've geyn an' a' that;
But tho' aw's poor, aw's varra sure, a chep's a man for a' that.

Aw cannot brag o' scholership, nor wag maw jaws an' a' that,
Wi' language fine to cut a shine, for aw've howked belaw an author;
An' a' this, an' a' that, my happy days an' a' that—
Noo friends look shy, and pass me by, still a man's a man for a' that.

This coat's seen mony a happy day at hoppin's fairs an' a' that,
But a' thor joys they've fled away, noo it's full o' tears an' a' that;
An' a' this, an' a' that, aw've lost the sleeve an' a' that,
But a' thor joys they've fled away, noo it's full o' tears an' a' that;
An' a' this, an' a' that, aw've lost the sleeve an' a' that,
But aw dinnet care, aw'l not despair, for a man's a man for a' that

This hat, yence new, its altered noo, aw've lost the croon an' a' that.
Aw hae nae brass, nae not a screw, an' friends they frown an' a' that;
An' a' this, an' a' that, aw's seedy noo an' a' that—

SPOKEN—Yes, rather seedy: for if poverty yence nails a chep, it sticks there. Aw seed a friend o' mine the other day—that is, that used to be—but he could scarcely see me; and when he did he had nought to give but advice. He says the next coat ye get meyde, get it meyde all in a piece; but it serves me reet; everybody should keep ane for a rainy day; as Billy Shakspeare says,—There's a tide i' the affairs o' man, but let a man be a friend to hissel' and he will never need the friendship of others. Yet there are men, such as me, who, in spite of all their efforts to get on i' the world, are ever unfortunate—

Still a man's a man for a' that.

You've seen maw ways, you've seen maw claithes, aw's raggy, bare, an' a' that—
Aw hae nae chaff to meyke ye laugh, your thoughts aw'l share for a' that;
For a' this an' a' that, thor's yene above, an' a' that,
That whispers tiv us collier lads, a man's a man for a' that.

Corvan continued to despise scroungers and praise honest poverty.

The Light Brigade had taken up Charles Mackay and Henry Russell's *Cheer, Boys, Cheer* as their anthem in the Crimea, and John Gilbert printed the lyrics in Newcastle.[8] Corvan used the tune for *Beer, Boys, Beer*, which showed utter contempt for lazy and unthinking scroungers. He also used the tune for *Cheer, Niggers, Cheer*. He had worked with Ceda and several other black performers at Balmbra's and elsewhere,[9] and he had read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly*, which was credited with furthering the abolition of slavery,[10] and he probably blacked up when he and Ceda sang together at their shared benefit in Sunderland. Some of the language he used is completely unacceptable to most people today, but it would be distorting his life and history in general to omit or otherwise censor it. Besides, his song's stress on hard work by black and white men evidently went down well with the audience, and underlined Corvan's respect for hard work by people of whatever nationality, race or colour.

Beer, boys, beer, that's the stuff for sorrow,
Forage out more we will upon our way;
The score behind the door we'll wipe it off to-morrow,
When we get over the boozin' of to-day.
So farewell, landlord, much as we may owe thee,
We'll drain your pots dry if you only draw:
Why should we think, lets drink to better fortune,
So farewell, landlord, farewell old cock, hurra.

Beer, boys, beer, all over town and country,
Beer, boys, beer, united hand in hand,
Beer, boys, beer, for those who don't labour,
Beer, boys, beer, who's a gallon going to stand?

Beer, boys, beer, the stuff for drinking,
Then blow out your bags while a single mag you've got;
Let's spend our lives jolly, what's the use of thinking,
What matter how the world wags if we can raise a pot?
Then push round the beer, boys, and banish care—be jolly,
And live in hopes, my boys, for better times soon:
When we'll all get drunk for nothing lads, won't we then be jolly?
And drink with flowing bumpers to Clarke's Arcade saloon.

Beer, boys, beer, all over town and country,
Beer, boys, beer, united hand in hand;
Beer, boys, beer, for those who don't labour,
Beer, boys, beer, whose a gallon going to stand?

Cheer, niggers, cheer, let's drive away all sorrow,
And live like jolly cocks upon de berry best;
And when de money's done we'll go some more to borrow,
Den in de old caboosh we'll all drop in and rest.
You play up de fiddle dere, while I'm de banjo ringing,
Den all join in chorus, and give a jolly shout;
And when we've all begun to finish wid de singing,
You, Sam, you nigger, knock de tambereen about.

Cheer, niggers, cheer, let's drive away all sorrow,
And live like jolly cocks upon de berry best;
And when de money's done we'll go some more to borrow,
Den in de old caboosh we'll all drop in and rest.

Now Ceda and myself return our thanks to-night, Sirs,
And wish Sunderland people prosperity evermore;
Our benefit they've patronized, which gives us great delight,
And with our kindest wishes we thank you all once more.
But why should we fret? let's hab a little chaffin—
Niggers shouldn't cry—I hate dem sighs and groans;
Misses Beecher Stowe says niggers are born laughing,
So keep up your pluck, niggers, go a-head dere, wid de bones.

Cheer, niggers, cheer, let's drive away all sorrow,
And live like jolly cocks upon de berry best;
And when de money's done we'll go some more to borrow,
Den in de old caboosh we'll all drop in and rest.

De ladies, God lub em, I see dem all before me,
Oh! how it makes me feel when I catch dere pleasant smiles;
I'm sure while I lib I ever will adore ye,
If I was away from you thirty million miles.
So farewell to all, my feelings pray excuse me,
And dere's nigger Ceda, he's berry much distress'd;
For we've always tryd like niggers ebery ebening to amuse ye—
None can do better dan do dere berry best.

Cheer, niggers, cheer, let's drive away all sorrow,
And live like jolly cocks upon de berry best;
And when de money's done we'll go some more to borrow,
Den in de old caboosh we'll all drop in and rest.

11

Corvan was also capable of envisaging an ideal future.

Two Hundred Years to come used the tune of *Days we went a Gypseying* by Edwin Ransford, a London singer of the 1830s and 1840s who idealised rural life.[12] Corvan's future utopia had to be on Tyneside.

Sometimes when aw sit by mysel',
Maw thowts runs varry queer,
So sum o' them aw mean to tell
The folks that's sittin' here.
Aw sometimes think—aw's mevies wrang—
Ther'll be see lots o' fun,
When the folks a' walk an' run by steam,
Two hundred years to come.

So if we nowt but leeve as lang
Aw'm sure we'll see the fun,
Gosh cap, hoo funny things'll be,
Two hundred years to come.

When the river Tyne is a' dried up,
An' keels laid o' the shelf,
An' ivery man hez pigs an' cows,
An' pockets full o' pelf.
When breed an' meet's as cheep as durt,
An' pants wi' beer dis run,
Smash, Geordy, them's the times for me,
Two hundred years to come.—So if we, &c.

When Billy Purvis's monument
Is stuck i' Nicholas'-square,
The Custom Hoose an' Jubilee Skuel
Will then be shifted there;
An' if we gan intiv a hoose
To get a glass o' rum,
We'll hev to shoot biv telegraph,
Two hundred years to come.—So if we, &c.

When grapes an' fegs hing roond wor door,
An' peacocks walk aboot,
Wor gardens grow a' sorts o' tea,
Wiv gladness then we'll shoot;
Wor bairns 'll be sic cliver cheps,
The pollis will luik glum,
See lazy cheps we winnit keep,
Two hundred years to come.—So if we, &c.

An' if we want to bool a match,
Or feight a quiet roond,
Ne magistrate 'll interfere
To turn uz off the grund.
Ivry man shall hev his share
Ov game an' hares begum;
What jolly feeds we then will hev,
Two hundred years to come.—So if we, &c.

But man ov a' the treets we'll hev,
Aw hevn't time to speak:
For, then, maw lads, aw'm sure thur'll be
Three Sundays ivry week.
We'll hev to work just noo an' then,
Wor brass we'll spend like fun,
Ther'll be nae shabby maisters then,
Two hundred years to come.
So if we nowt, &c.

13

The popularity of Corvan's songs seems to have tempted a Newcastle printer.

William Reay Walker was born in Boldon in 1822 and by 1851 he was a 'Printer & Compositor' and lived in Argyle Street, All Saints, Newcastle, with Margaret, his Jarrow-born wife, a baby son and William's mother. By August 1854 Walker had bought John Gilbert's shop and wanted an apprentice 'to the STATIONERY and PRINTING'.[14] *The Songs of the Tyne No. 5* included Corvan's *He wad be a Noodle*, *Maw Stepmother*, *Gallowgate Hoppin', Tommy Carr's Adventures in Astrilly*, *Hairy Gobs and Fine Moosecatchers*, *Deeth of Billy Purvis*, *Days When I Was Hard Up*, *Stag[e] Struck Keelman* and *Trip to Marsden Rock*,[15] but omitted *Tom Johnson*. He also printed a 24-page songbook that included *Swaggering at the Races*, *The Rise in Coals*, *The Keel on Fire*, *Warkworth Feast*, *The Pitman and the Kippered Herrin'*, *The Factory Lass*, *The Unfortunate Man*, *The Sandgate Lass*, *Astrilly, or the Pitman's Farewell* and *Astrilly's Gold Field*. The only surviving copy lacks a front page,[16] but its existence might have come as a surprise to Corvan, and Walker subsequently printed three numbers of *Corvan's Song Book*.

CORVAN'S SONG BOOK. 1.

CONTENTS:—

Asstrilly, or the Pitman's Farewell
Asstrilly's Goold Fields, or Tommy Carr's letter
Keel on Fire
Pully Jones the Factory Lass
Pitman and the Kippered Herrin'
Rise in Coals
Swaggering at the races
Sandgate Lass
Toon Improvement Bill, or nee Pleyce noo to Play
Unfortunate Man
Visit to Billy's Show
Warkworth Feast

PRICE ONE PENNY.

W. R. WALKER, Printer, Arcade, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

CORVAN'S SONG BOOK. 2.

CONTENTS:—

He wad be a Noodle.
Newcastle Fair.
Maw Stepmother, or Billy Bags the Glutton.
An Acrostic on the death of Wm. Mitford.
Lads o' Tyneside.
Gallowgate Hoppin.
Tommy Carr's Adventures in Asstrilly.
The Dream.
Hair Gobs and Fine Mousecatchers.
Nancy Dawson.
Death of Billy Purvis.
Days when I was hard-up
Keelman and the Grindstone.
Stage Struck Keelman.
Keelmans visit to the ees'l
Trip to Marsden Rock.
Docter Syntax.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

W. R. WALKER, Printer, Arcade, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

CORVAN'S SONG BOOK. 3.

CONTENTS:—

Bella Gray.
The Queen's Second Visit
The Cullercoats Fishwife.
Peep at Newcassel.
Widow Winks.
Prince Albert's Baby House, or the great Exhibition of 1851.
Snooks the Artist.
O hey ye seen wor Jimmy
The Collier' Farewell.
The Gateshead Lass's Lament.
Geordie's Leiter frae Callerforney.
My Canny Wife.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

W. R. WALKER, Printer, Arcade, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

17

J.P. Robson had credited *A Visit to Billy's Show* to 'Incognito' in 1849 and recommended the tune of his *The Wonderful Tallygrip*.

Ov a' the fine seets that iver aw saw, man,
Billy's grand show it bangs them a',
A chep tell'd me the other neet, man,
That Billy had varry near lost his craw;
It's lang since aw saw him, doon i' the garth, man,
Aw thowt aw might de warse than give him a ca,'
So wi' that intent aw mairch'd off, one neet, man,
Fra that canny bit place they ca' "Rowley's Raw,"

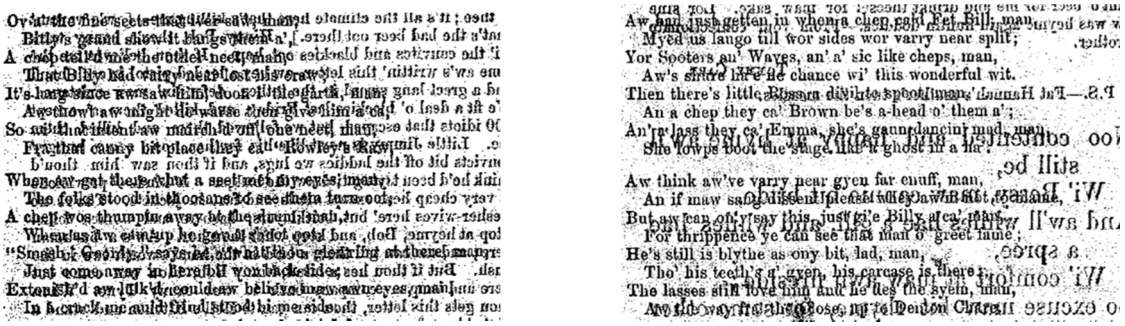
When aw gat there what a seet met my eyes, man,
The folks stood in thoosans to see them turn oot,
A chep wos thumpin away at the drum, man,
When as aw cam up he gov a shoot oot.
"Smash! Geordy," says he, "what's thou glowring at there, man.
Just come away in here bi' wor back-side;
Extonish'd aw luik'd, could aw believe maw awn eyes, man,
In a crack me au'd frind stood bi me side.

Aw had just getten in when a chep ca'd Fat Bill, man,
Myed us laugh till wor sides wor varry near split;

Aw had just getten in when a chep ca'd Fat Bill, man,
Myed us laugh till wor sides wor varry near split;
Yor Sooters an' Waves, an' a' sic like cheps, man,
Aw's shure ha'e ne chance wi' this wonderful wit.
Then there's little Ross, a divil te spoot, man,
An a chep they ca' Brown he's a-head o' them a';
An' a lass they ca' Emma, she's gaun dancin' mad, man,
She lowps boot the stage like a ghost in a ha'.

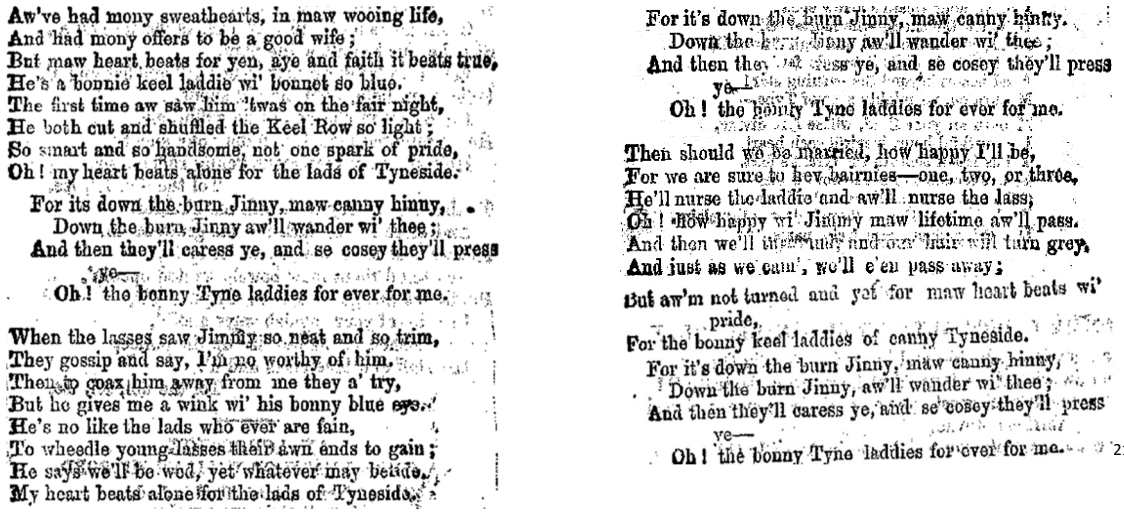
Aw think aw've varry near gyen far enuff, man,
An if maw sang dissent please whey aw'm not to blame,
But aw can on'y say this, just gi'e Billy a ca' man,
For thrippence ye can see that man o' greet fame;
He's still as blythe as ony bit lad, man,
Tho' his teeth's a' gyen, his carcase is there;
The lasses still love him and he des the syem, man,
Aw the way fra' the Close, up te Denton Chare. 18

Walker used thin paper that let ink show through, making the words of his version of this song largely illegible, and he or his pressman or apprentice also introduced typos. No tunes were mentioned throughout the three numbers.



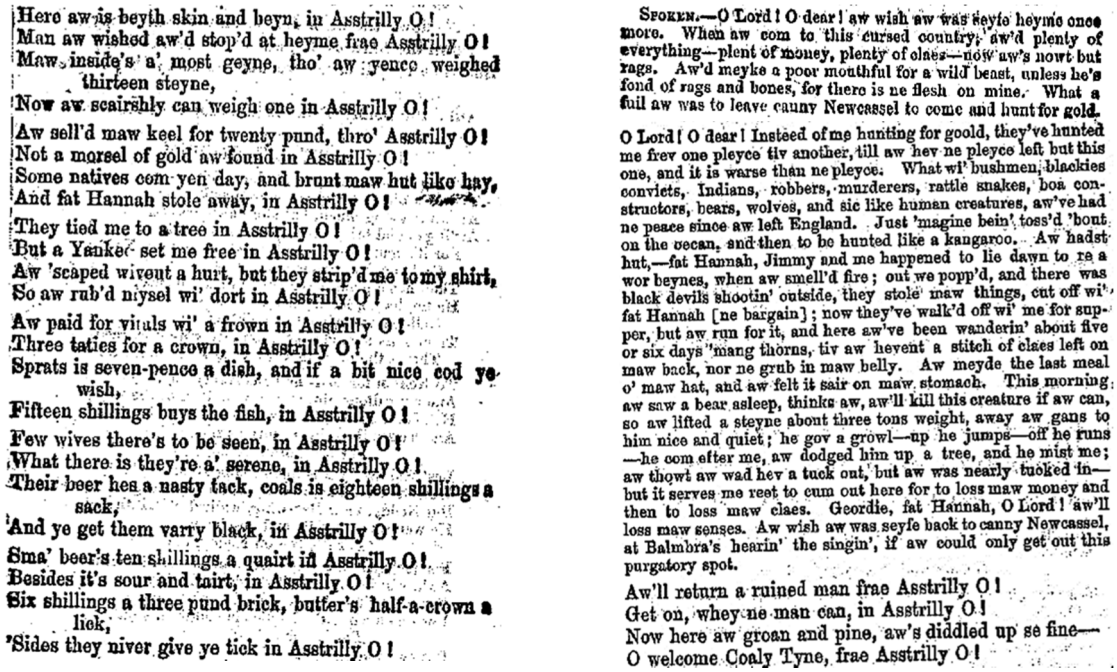
Song Book 2 included four old songs - *The Dream*, *Nancy Dawson*, *Newcastle Fair* and *Doctor Syntax* - but Walker did not credit Robert Emery for his acrostic on Mitford, William Armstrong for *Keelman and the Grindstone* or James Sutherland for *The Keelman's Visit to the Cassel*.

Corvan evidently dressed as a young woman to sing *Lads O' Tyneside*.[20]



The tune was associated with Carolina Nairne's *The Laird o' Cockpen*.[22]

Tommy Carr's Adventures in Asstrilly may well have been a satirical response to hearing about an emigrant's experiences.



Corvan evidently sang this to the tune of *Kelvin Grove*,[24] which was associated with Thomas Lyle's sentimental lyrics of 1811,[25] which later appeared on an imprintless Newcastle slip song.[26]

Four previously unpublished Corvan songs appeared in *Song Book 3*, including *Peep at Newcassel*.

Wor Dick and me the other day had a ravel through the town, sir,
And aw agreed that what aw se'd, in verse, aw wad put down sir;
Sic alterations every where, or some grand undertaking,
In every street aw'm sure thou'll find Newcassel folks is making.
But niver mind whatever aw'm said, push along keep moving,
Raise the steam, gan straight a head, Newcassel town's improving.
There's wor High Level Bridge, thou knaws 'stonish's beyth greet and sma', sir,
There's not its marrow in the world, aw'm sure it bangs them all, sir,
And when it's finished whe can touch wor splendid Central Station,
Aw'd like to hev maw lodgings there, its another alteration.
But never mind, etc.
Wor Dick and me step'd in awhile, and wandered up and down, sir,
Aw se'd lots, and Dick se'd lots, belangin' to the town, sir;
There were lasses dress'd up in their best the height of fascination;
They winked at Dick and then at me, that's another alteration.
But never mind, etc.
We come out at last, we crossed the road to reach the tother side, man;
When aleblaster men and wives in raws we soon espied, man;
Fountains, dolphins, ornaments, was there for observation,
By gosh, says aw to Dick, maw lad, here's another alteration.
But niver mind, etc.

We met two lasses efter that, we in with them did pop, sir,
In the Spital Inn—aye, that's the place to hev a cheerin' drop, sir;
The ladies they felt kind of dry, beyond maw expectations,
We left them, searched wor pockets, fund some curious alterations.
But niver mind, etc.
Aw'm sure the town's improvin' fast in buildin' streets and squares, man,
And buildin's they are modernisin', with new fronts and repairs, man;
There's wor museum open now for yer accommodation.
There's a rowin' club formed on the Tyne, that's another alteration.
But niver mind, etc.
To meet yer kind approval folks, and meyke things pass off brightly,
The company with mawsel' aw'm sure their efforts will rise nightly;
No expense Mr. B. he spares for your accommodation,
Nor niver will, while novelty can make an alteration.
But niver mind, etc.
Yet aw've an alteration yet, all others it surpasses,
In former times, aw understood, lads went a courting lasses;
But now its changed the other way, to my own observation,
For lasses gans a courtin' lads, that's a funny alteration.
But niver mind, etc.
What pleases me the best of all, in this and other places,
No alteration to be fund in your canny smiling faces;
But if there's ought aw've said or sung, throughout this short narration,
You've nought to de but say it's wrang, and aw'll make an alteration.
But niver mind, etc. 27

Corvan evidently sang this to the tune of *Betsy Baker,*[28] which had been published in London in the late 1820s.[29]

Corvan's *Widow Winks* had two sons who were among the Tyne seamen who had gone 'to fight the nasty Czar'.

Protect us a', things now is raised, times niver was so bad,
If it was nit for maw drop rum, life wad be dull and sad;
Ten cups of tea that's very little aw's sure the Lord be praised,
Maw stomach's of the warkish kind, for every thing's been raised.
Oh! poor Widow Winks, aw is near fainting when aw thinks,
If they should raise the rum or gin, what wad become of poor Widow Winks.
Aw can scarcely manage two pund of breed, maw appetite's so poor,
For a single meal it's nought ye knaw, but now they've raised the flour;
Besides maw frame's so delicate, aw can scarcely draw maw breeth,
But if ye put your fingers in maw gob, ye'll say aw hev good teeth.
Oh! poor, etc.
Excuse me smokin' here, maw friend, but it cheers maw poor aud heart,
And it's sic a comfort since John Winks frae this weary world did part:
But aw expect he'll be an angel now, for him how maw poor heart yarns,
For since he's gyne, their's neyn left now, to de maw bits of turns.
Oh! poor widow, etc.

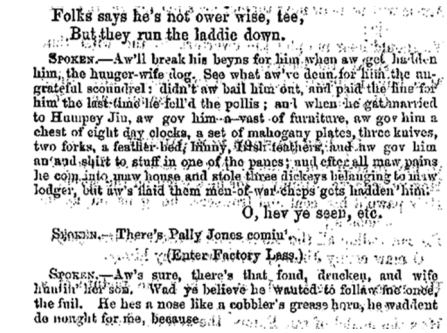
Sic an angel maw lad meyks, hinney, six feet was his height;
He's left me in this weary world, a widow in my prime,
But aw winna funk because aw've had nine husbands in maw time.
Oh! poor widow, etc.
And what a family aw've brought up, of gobby lads and sluts;
But they've aw been summit like mawsel', got pulled up by the roots;
Aw hev two sons gyne to Russia to fight the nasty Czar,
And that's the way they hev raised the grub to carry on the war!
Oh! poor widow, etc.
Spoken.—Sic a man aw lost, sic a kind hearted man, When aw had the windy splashins in maw inside, he run away to the chemist's shop, (that was the public house next door), and gat a drop rum to mend me; and sec fond of bairns as he was, aw've seen him run about with little Jinny steyne naked at nights; but he is geyne now, he was in nine clubs; and the only good aw ever gat out of him was his club money, besides aw hev got his clothes to fit maw next man. The worms will be at him, now, poor Mr. Winks.
But now aw'll bid you all good night, for maw mind is in great distress,
And if aw hev chanced to say ought wrang, dinnit think me ought less;
So all ye wives that's got good men, mind use them well—be sure,
For ye little ken the troubles of a widow when she is poor.
Oh! poor widow, etc. 30

(The fourth verse lacked a line.[31]) The tune of *Lucy Neal* ,[32] J.P. Carter's 'blackface' song, was published in Boston in 1844.[33]

Corvan knew some mothers worried about sons who remained on Tyneside and wrote *O, hev ye seen wor Jimmy*.

O, hev ye seen wor Jimmy? hev ye seen wor Jimmy?
Hev ye seen wor Jimmy? for he's geyn on the spree.
He's pawn'd his coat and trowsers, he gans on as he chooses;
He can wallop all the bullies and bruisers on the Quay.
O maw canny Jimmy, O, maw bonny hinny.
His nose it's neat and canny, he's the picture of a manny;
He's the model of wor Fanny, the aud drucken sow.
Aw'll yark his beyns with skelpin,
And set the trash a yelpin',
Lord preserve us, there's ne helpin'
Beystin' laddies now!

He's the only son aw've hadden,
A mother's heart to gladden,
And mercy he's a bad un,
O, maw canny Jim!
His ways are kind of wildish,
He courts the lasses stylish,
His tempor it's se mulish,
There's neyn can wallop him.
He hes a bull-dog with him,
Folks darenit de ought to him,
A good heart beats within him,
For he knocks the pollis down.
He hes twe nice black eyes, tee,
And a mouth for eatin' pies, tee,



Folks says he's not ower wise, tee,
But they run the laddie down.

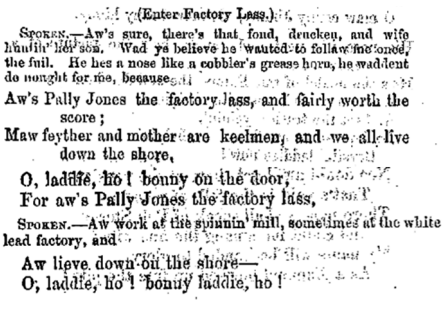
SPOKEN.—Aw'll break his beyns for him when aw get haddon him, the hunger-wife dog. See what aw've deun for him the ungrateful scoundrel; didn't aw bail him ont, and paid the fine for him the last time he fell'd the pollis; and when he gat married to Humpey Jin, aw gov him a vast of furniture, aw gov him a chest of eight day clocks, a set of mahogany plates, three knives, two forks, a feather bed, linny, fissh feathers, and aw gov him an'and shirt to stuff in one of the panes; and efter all maw pains he com into maw house and stole three dickeys belanging to maw lodger, but aw's laid them men-of-war cheps gets hadden him.

O, hev ye seen, etc.

SPOKEN.—There's Pally Jones comin'.

(Enter Factory Lass.)

SPOKEN.—Aw's sure, there's that fond, dencken, and wife handin' her son. Wad ye believe he wanted to follaw me onced, the fnil. He hes a nose like a cobbler's grease horn, he waddent do nought for me, because



(Enter Factory Lass.)

SPOKEN.—Aw's sure, there's that fond, dencken, and wife handin' her son. Wad ye believe he wanted to follaw me onced, the fnil. He hes a nose like a cobbler's grease horn, he waddent do nought for me, because

Aw's Pally Jones the factory lass, and fairly worth the score;
Maw feyther and mother are keelmen, and we all live down the shore,
O, laddie, ho! bonny on the door,
For aw's Pally Jones the factory lass,

SPOKEN.—Aw work at the spinnin' mill, sometimes at the white lead factory, and

Aw lieve down on the shore—
O, laddie, ho! bonny laddie, ho!

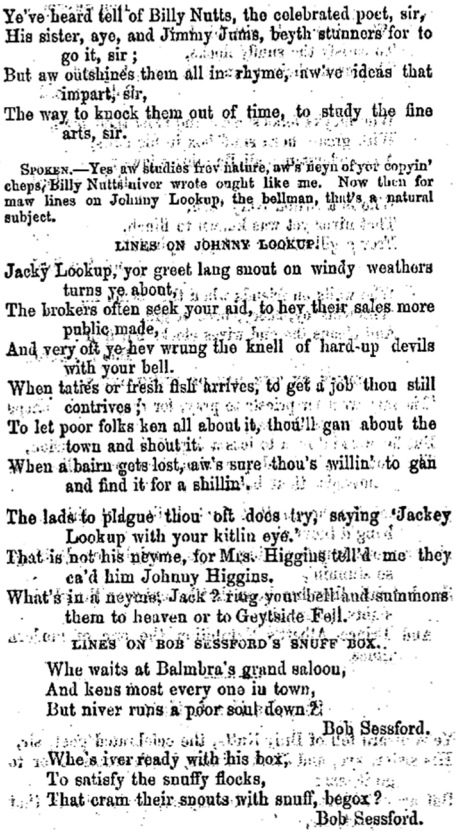
34

These lyrics were later set to *O' gin I had her*,[35] a tune Bobby Nunn had used.[36]

The illiterate Bellman, John Higgins, got £10 a year from the Corporation and had 'a good business as a house agent', but charged 1s, the equivalent of a labourer's daily pay, to find a lost child.[37] He usually wore a blue uniform coat and top hat and had 'an awful cast in his eye, which gave him a comical appearance' as he walked round the town and halted at street corners.

> Striking three strokes of his bell, Johnny's mouth would fall at one side, and in stentorian tones he would cry: 'L-o-s-t, a little girl' Then followed its age, a description of its dress, and an assurance that anyone restoring it to its parents 'would be well rewarded for his trouble'. Then, with as grave an air as a judge on the bench, up went his fingers to the brim of his hat, 'God save the Queen!' a signal at once for the crowd to shout, and they never failed: 'Divil tyek the bell-man!'[38]

Higgins figured in Corvan's *Snooks the Artist*.



Ye've heard tell of Billy Nutts, the celebrated poet, sir,
His sister, aye, and Jimmy Jutis, beyth stunners for to go it, sir;
But aw outshines them all in rhyme, aw've ideas that impart, sir,
The way to knock them out of time, to study the fine arts, sir.

SPOKEN.—Yes aw studies frov nature, aw's neyn of yer copyin' cheps, Billy Nutts niver wrote ought like me. Now then for maw lines on Johnny Lookup, the bellman, that's a natural subject.

LINES ON JOHNNY LOOKUP.

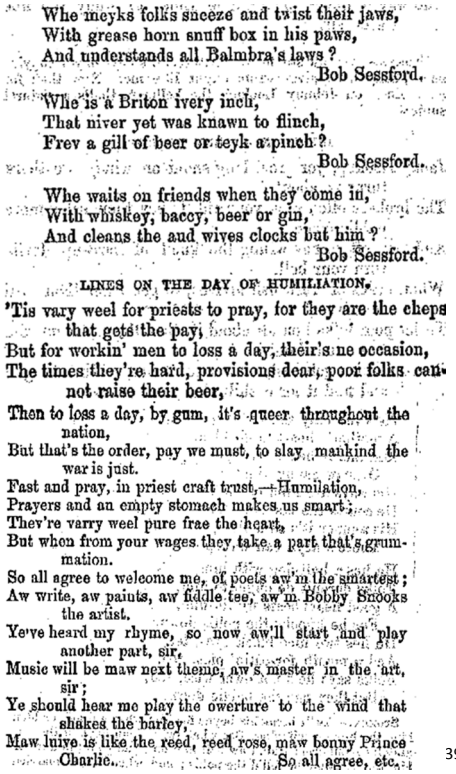
Jacky Lookup, yor greet lang snout on windy weathers turns ye about,
The brokers often seek your aid, to hev their sales more public made,
And very oft ye hev wrung the knell of hard-up devils with your bell.
When taties or fresh fisli arrives, to get a job thou still contrives;
To let poor folks ken all about it, thou'll gan about the town and shout it.
When a bairn gets lost, aw's sure thou's willin' to gan and find it for a shillin'.

The lads to pidgue thou oft does try, saying 'Jackey Lookup with your kitlin eye.'
That is not his neyme, for Mrs. Higgins tell'd me they ca'd him Johnny Higgins.
What's in a neyme, Jack? rung your bell and summons them to heaven or to Geytside Fell.

LINES ON BOB SESSFORD'S SNUFF BOX.

Whe waits at Balmbra's grand saloon,
And kens most every one in town,
But niver runs a poor soul down?
Bob Sessford.

Whe's iver ready with his box,
To satisfy the snuffy flocks,
That cram their snouts with snuff, begox?
Bob Sessford.



Whe meyks folks sneeze and twist their jaws,
With grease horn snuff box in his paws,
And understands all Balmbra's laws?
Bob Sessford.

Whe is a Briton ivery inch,
That niver yet was knawn to flinch,
Frev a gill of beer or teyk a pinch?
Bob Sessford.

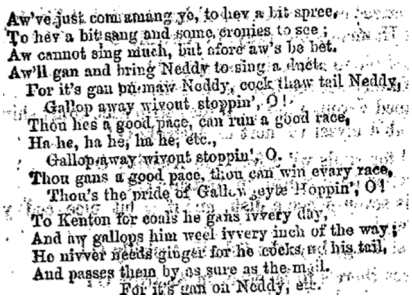
Whe waits on friends when they come in,
With whiskey, baccy, beer or gin,
And cleans the aud wives clocks but him?
Bob Sessford.

LINES ON THE DAY OF HUMILIATION.

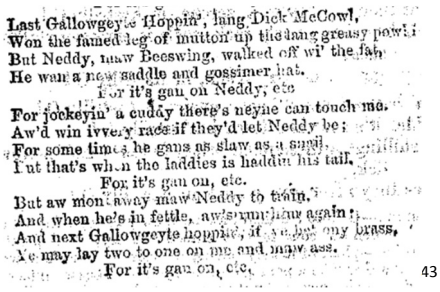
'Tis vary weel for priests to pray, for they are the cheps that gets the pay,
But for workin' men to loss a day, their's ne occasion,
The times they're hard, provisions dear, poor folks can not raise their beer,
Then to loss a day, by gum, it's queer throughout the nation,
But that's the order, pay we must, to slay mankind the war is just.
Fast and pray, in priest craft trust,—Humiliation,
Prayers and an empty stomach makes us smart;
They're varry weel pure frae the heart,
But when from your wages they take a part that's grummation.
So all agree to welcome me, of poets aw'm the smartest;
Aw write, aw paints, aw fiddle tee, aw'm Bobby Snooks the artist.
Ye've heard my rhyme, so now aw'll start and play another part, sir,
Music will be maw next theme, aw's master in the art, sir;
Ye should hear me play the owerture to the wind that shakes the barley,
Maw luive is like the reed, reed rose, maw bonny Prince Charlie.
So all agree, etc.

39

Corvan sang these lyrics to the tune associated with *Billy Nutts*,[40] written by John Martin in London,[41] which H. Williamson had published in Newcastle a decade or so earlier.[42] In *Gallowgate Hoppin* a 'cuddy' (ass) hauled coal from Kenton Colliery to the town centre three miles away and Corvan compared 'Neddy' to *Beeswing*, the best racing mare in the north of England.



Aw've just com amang ye, to hev a bit spree,
To hev a bit sang and some cronies to see;
Aw cannot sing much, but afore aw's be bet.
Aw'll gan and bring Neddy to sing a duet.
For it's gan on maw Neddy, cock thaw tail Neddy,
Gallop away wivout stoppin', O!
Thou hes a good pace, can run a good race,
Ha he, ha he, ha he, etc.,
Gallop away wivout stoppin', O.
Thou gans a good pace, thou can win evary race,
Thou's the pride of Gallowgeyte Hoppin', O!
To Kenton for coals he gans ivvery day,
And ay gallops him weel ivvery inch of the way;
He nivver needs ginger for he cocks up his tail,
And passes them by as sure as the mail.
For it's gan on Neddy, etc.



Last Gallowgeyte Hoppin', lang Dick McCowl,
Won the famed leg of mutton up the lang greasy powl;
But Neddy, maw Beeswing, walked off wi' the fat,
He wan a new saddle and gossimer hat.
For it's gan on Neddy, etc.
For jockeyin' a cuddy there's neyne can touch me.
Aw'd win ivvery race if they'd let Neddy be;
For some times he gans as slaw as a snail,
But that's when the laddies is haddin his tail.
For it's gan on, etc.
But aw mon away maw Neddy to train,
And when he's in fettle, aw'se run maw again;
And next Gallowgeyte hoppin', if aw get ony brass,
Ye may lay two to one on me and maw ass.
For it's gan on, etc.

43

Corvan sang these lyrics to the tune of *Hey, Randy Dandy, O*,[44] which Elias Howe had published in the USA.[45]

Four other songs had appeared in J.P. Robson's *Bards of the Tyne*, though he had not credited the author of *The Collier's Farewell* or *The Gateshead Lass's Lament*,[46] and neither did Walker.[47] Robson had attributed *My Canny Wife* to 'D',[48] but Walker left that out,[49] and while Robson had credited *Geordie's Letter frae Callerforney* to T. Kennedy,[50] Walker did not.[51]

In spring Corvan's brother Thomas married Sarah Beeby and their brother Matthew, who had merchant navy certificate number 8123, was due to leave on the 300-ton South Shields sailing vessel, the *Lily*.

In Newcastle William Grant was about to reopen the 'entirely refitted and decorated' Royal Olympic Music Hall with a 'Talented Company', but 'Professionals of talent' were 'required in every department'.[52] At Whitsuntide thousands left town on cheap excursion trains to Alnwick, Warkworth, Carlisle, York and Leeds; but Newcastle's hoppings were 'everything that could be desired' by 'the juvenile classes'. The 'older and adult population' preferred the town's museums, ballrooms, a firework display, a circus and concerts, including the Royal Olympic;[53] but in July, and again in August, an advertisement appeared in *The Era*.

DESIRABLE INVESTMENT, requiring only a Small Capital, may be entered upon immediately. Large and Commodious premises, occupied as a Concert Room, fit to seat 1,500 persons, a Large and Commodious Billiard Room, every utensil complete, a Liquor-bar and Parlour, and Sitting-room, Newsroom, large and commodious Quoit Ground, also sufficient ground to erect an American Bowling Alley. The whole requiring little over £100, and is only to be disposed of in consequence of the present occupant being about to leave England.
Apply to Mr. Wardle, Post-office, South Shields.

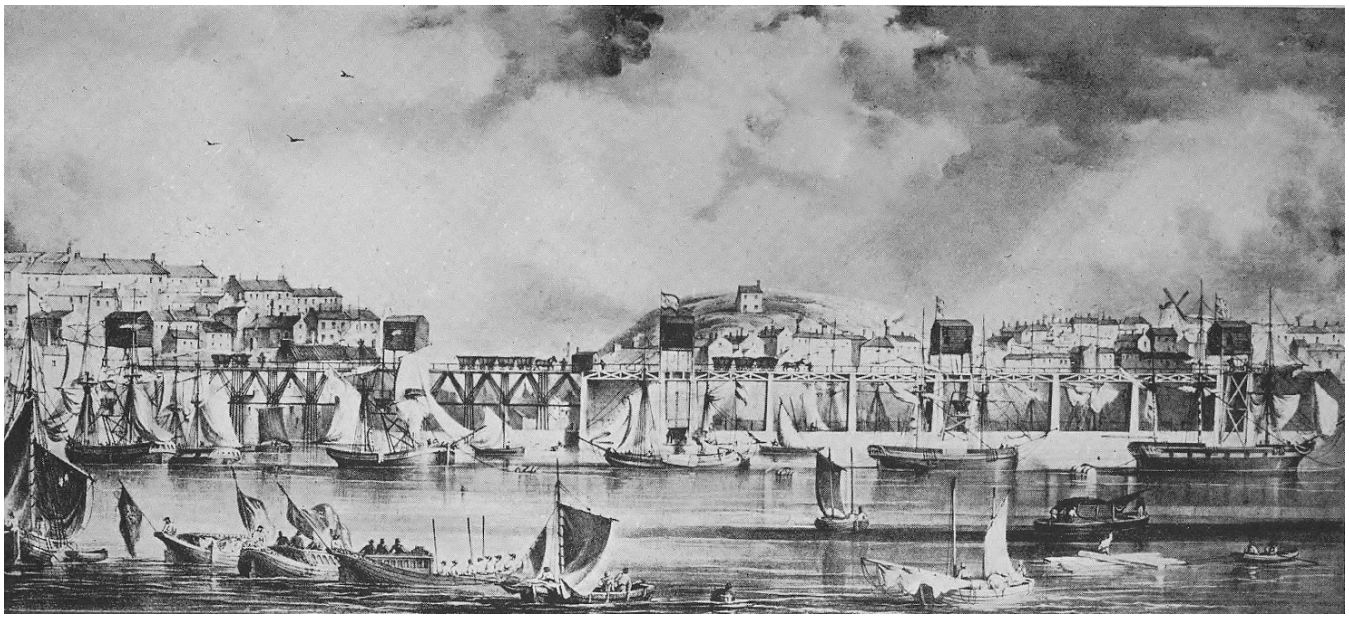
TO BE LET, with immediate possession, the ROYAL OLYMPIC SINGING SALOON, situate in NEWGATE-STREET, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
The above establishment comprises one of the largest and best decorated Singing Saloons in the North of England, a Billiard Room and Table, and Bar, Parlours, &c.; in every way suited to a first-rate business, and is situated in one of the best thoroughfares in this populous town. The outly required for fixtures, &c., very moderate.
Apply to Mr. G. Wardle, Post-office; South Shields. 54

In Sunderland J.P Robson worked as a clerk for Thomas Marwood, a 'Publisher & General agent' in Chester Road who produced *Marwood's North of England maritime directory, shipping register and commercial advertiser*.[55] In December Robson received some recognition from the Guild of Literature and Art, which supported writers who had fallen on hard times,[56] and he published *Tyneside Songs. As sung by W. Thompson and others* in Newcastle.[57]

By then Ned Corvan had left Sunderland for South Shields.

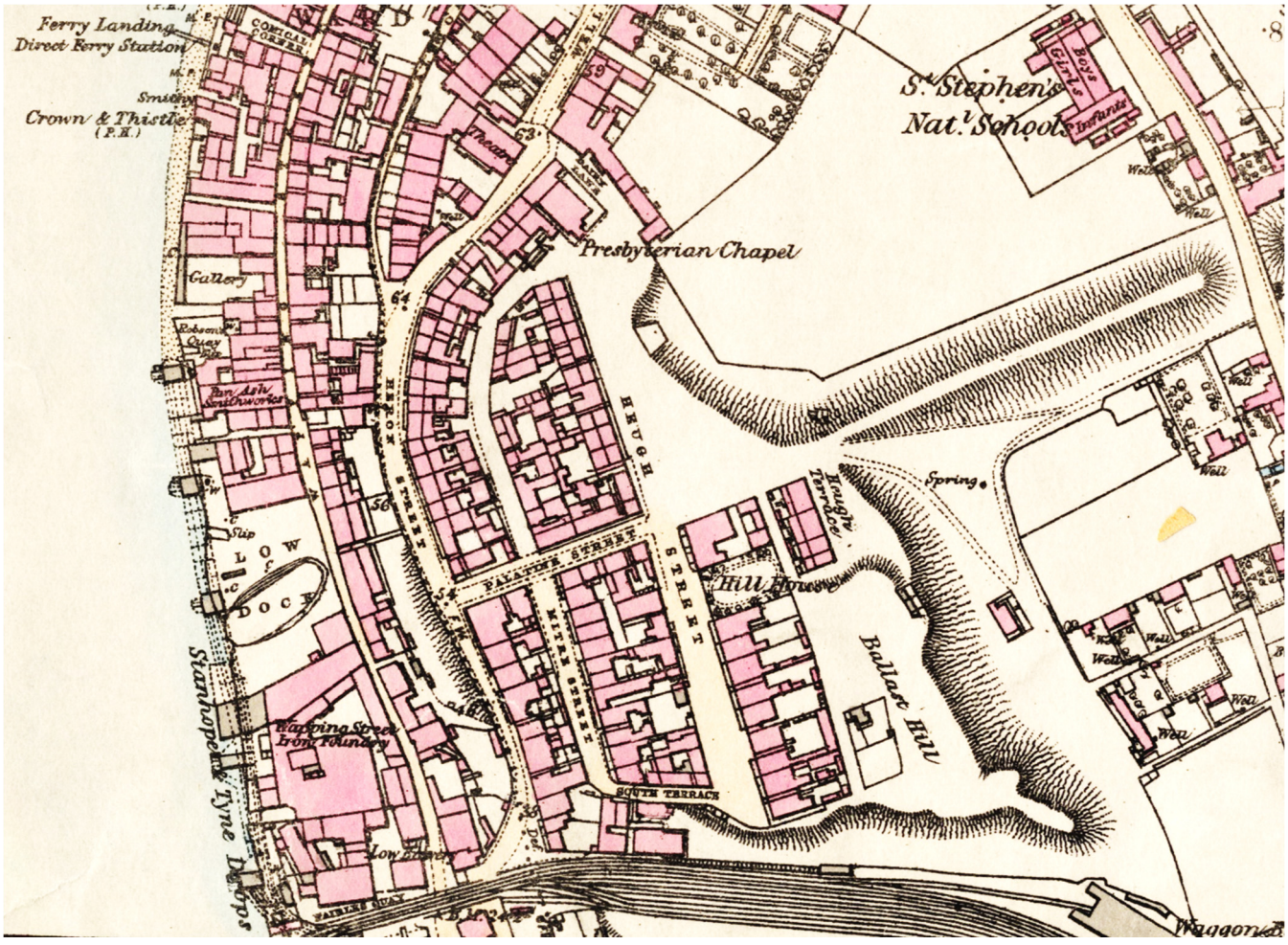
8. Mr Corvan's Music Hall

Around 1760 a Mr Burdon built a ballast quay at the Broad Landing in South Shields and a few years later Mr Fairles bought a half-share. It became known as Fairles' Quay, [1] and by 1834 it was to the east of the new Stanhope and Tyne coal drops.[2]



3

By late 1846 William Cook was the licensee of the Fairles' Arms in Wapping Street,[4] but in 1848 'rogues' broke into his pantry and stole a quarter of lamb, joints of beef, and 'other eatables'.[5] By 1850 the pub address was 125 Wapping Street,[6] and it stood opposite the Low Brewery, near the railway lines to the drops, at the bottom left of the later map below.



7

The Fairles' Arms had 18 rooms,[8] and was probably the left-hand building below.

[9]

In February 1850 the Fairles' Arms Hotel was the venue for the sale of a large house and workshop in Wapping Street.[10] In summer 1852 the licensee, John Moffat, had a tent on Newcastle Town Moor for the races, but had his watch stolen.[11] By 1853 Mr G. Moffatt was the licensee,[12] and in September *The Era* opposed the Beer Bill and focussed on South Shields.

THE BEER BILL IN A SEAPORT TOWN.—Shields, as the reader is probably aware, is the harbour-town of the Tyne. It is divided into North and South, has a population of nearly 70,000 souls, and in the course of the year about 40,000 sail of ships enter and leave the harbour. Independently of the large seafaring population, some thousands of workmen are employed in the manufacture of glass, alkali, and articles of iron, and in iron shipbuilding. The village of Tynemouth, a bathing place at the mouth of the harbour, is also the lungs of Newcastle, so that the population that comes under the cognisance of the police is as varied as well can be. The Beer Bill for closing public houses at two o'clock on Sunday afternoons until six in the evening, and at ten o'clock at night of those days, has been in force in those towns during the three past Sundays, with the following results:—In South Shields, wherein is situated Messrs. Swinburne's large glassworks, the Jarrow, Don, and East Jarrow chemical works, a large foundry, a large engine building and iron steamship factory, nine shipyards, and staiths shipping above 1,000,000 tons of coals in the year, between midnight on Saturdays, August 19, August 26, and September 2, and nine o'clock of the mornings of the following Mondays, not one single individual has been in the custody of the police for drunken or disorderly conduct, or any offence whatever arising from drink. During the three Sundays previous to the 19th of August, and within the hours already mentioned, fifty persons were in the custody of the police at North Shields for drunkenness and disorderly conduct arising therefrom. The figures were—July 30, nine; August 6, thirteen; August 13, twenty-eight; total, fifty. On August 19, the first day the act was put in force, four persons were taken into custody; on the 26th, five; and last Sunday, the 3d of September, seven; total, sixteen. Considerable fleets of vessels have been in harbour during the past three Sundays, and nine-tenths of those who have been in custody have been foreign and American seamen or prostitutes. Visitors to Tynemouth are considered *bona fide* travellers, and are allowed to partake of refreshment in the taverns; and to illustrate the fact that the thousands of working men and tradesmen who come down from the Tyneside towns to the seaside on Sundays are neither drunken nor mischievous, the police have not had occasion to interfere in Tynemouth to protect the peace on the days already mentioned. [13]

In spring 1854 John Allen was the licensee of the Fairless Arms, but his insolvency hearing was to be held in June.[14]

Billy Purvis probably coined the saying that 'North Shields is the sunny side' of the Tyne, but 'South Shields is the money side',[15] and early in October 1854 Edward Corvan advertised in the *North & South Shields Gazette*.

FAIRLESS ARMS, MUSIC HALL,
WAPPING STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS.

MR. EDWARD CORVAN, Composer and Singer of Tyne Side Comic Songs, respectfully informs his Friends and the Public of South Shields, &c., that he has re opened the above Premises (lately occupied by Mr. J. ALLEN,) where he hopes by strict attention to Business and Civility to his Visitors, to merit that support which has ever been his study to deserve.

N.B. a Splendid Shooting Gallery is now open under the immediate direction of the celebrated Mr. FAWELL. [16]

The Crimean War continued, and shooting practice was officially encouraged, but inns and beer houses were another matter.

The Beer Act barred licensed premises from opening between 2.30pm and 6.00pm on weekdays and after 10.00pm on Sundays. Early in October a group of Newcastle licensees agreed with John Balmbra's opinion that the Act had been passed 'in a hurried and improper manner' and injured the trade and the drinking public. The meeting unanimously resolved to establish a Licensed Victuallers' Association to take every legal means to 'prevent any further encroachments being made upon their trade and business', and Balmbra was one of those elected to the LVA's committee.[17]

On 6 October around 2,800 tons of sulphur and 128 tons of sodium nitrate exploded in Gateshead, and could be heard 20 miles away. A fire spread to Newcastle Quayside, killing 153 in total,[18] and making 800 families homeless.[19]

20

Photographs showed the devastated western chares of Newcastle Quayside, right up to the Sandhill.

21

Many buildings were totally destroyed and others suffered very serious damage.

22

Corvan reworked *O, hev ye seen wor Jimmy* as *The Fire on the Kee* and used three tunes and a 'Descriptive Chaunt'. A 'kail pot' and a 'yetlin' were small metal cooking vessels.

Air—"Wor Jocker."

Oh! hae ye seen wor Jimmy, Oh! hae ye seen wor Jimmy?
Oh hae ye seen wor Jimmy? for the lad's gyen on the spree,
He's pawn'd his coat an' troosirs, he gans on as he chooses,

CHORUS.

Oh! hae ye seen wor Jimmy, Oh! hae ye seen wor Jimmy?
Tell me, maw canny hinney, for the lad's gyen on the spree.

His nose is neat an' cannny, he's a model ov a mannie,
An' the pictor o' wor Fanny, Oh! the nasty drukken soo;
Aw'll yark his byens wi' skelpin, aw'll set the yelp a yelpin,
Presarve us! there's nae helpin bystin laddies noo.

CHORUS.

He hes a bulldog win him, folks dorsent say owt tiv him,
A gad heart beats within him, for he knocks the pollis doon;
He hes twee nice black eyes, tee, an' a mouth for eatin pies, tee,
Folks says he's not ower wise, tee, an' cawl the lad a cloon.

SPOKEN—Aw wish aw cud lay hands on him, he went to seek wark this mornin—Wark! he's been seekin wark this 14 years an' nivor gettin a job yit—But that fire on the Kee ruined the lad's mind; a geyble end iv a hoose fell on his heed—He's been crack'd ivor since. Marcy, what a cutty forsty but aw'll gie ye an account on't efter the style ov the "Deeth o' Nelson."

Air—"'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay."

It was a fearful crash, old buildings they went smash,
'Twas never so before;
The haunts of "auld lang syne" burnt down on Coaly Tyne,
Laying waste the desolate shore;
For Oh! it was a fearful sight, and many a home was lost that night,
Fordeath's grim visitation brought ruin and devastation
And as from 'mid the flames they hie,
Mercy! save us! hundreds cry,
O! Firemen do your duty!
O! Firemen do your duty!

Air—"Descriptive Chant."

Hurrying to and fro countless numbers might be seen,
Emerging after hairbreath 'scapes from ruins where danger just had been;
The soldiers in solemn silence guards the dangerous way,
And firemen willing point the hose to where gaiety dwelt but yesterday;
The populace rush forth half-dressed in day or night attire,
Like maniacs with maddened brain, from death's devouring fire.

CHORUS.

For oh! the flames, Vesuvius like, they spread o'er land and sea,
Laying desolate waste the spot where once had stood Newcastle Kee.

Now many serio-comic scenes were enacted where poor people did dwell,
For goods and chattels from mysterious cribs came tumbling down pellmell.
Aw saw one poor deevil, mevies just gettin oot o' bed,
Hop varry quick to one side iz a wash-han'-basin, a kyel pot an a yetlin fell a-top iv his head.
Twas fearful to see the poor awd wives in narrow chares an lanes
Pickin up their bits o' things, exposin life, assure they spared ne pains.

CHORUS.

Aw say, Pally! thraw the bed oot the window, niver mind the stocks,
Seize Ned's Sunday breetches aw bowt last week, but niver mind the box.
Marcy! the floor's geen way,—noo whe wid iver think
That decent folks gan te bed 'boot 10 o'clock shud be see close upon deeth's brink.

Search for Tommy's fustin claes, aw cannot see for smoke,
Luik sharp, ye splatter-fyeced bunter, or else, begum aw'll choke.

CHORUS.

Search for the bairn's cradle, it's a claes-basket, niver mind, shove it to the door.
Let the aud clock stand agyen the wall, its time it went 'cas it waddent gan before,
A Garmin for a shillin a week clagged it up agyen the wall,
He's got nowt yit, so faith his *tick* aw think 'ill suin be *tickin* small.
They say Ralphy L—tle's broke his legs, but that myeks little matter,
Cawse a glass o' brandy 'll put him reet, wiv a bottle o' soda watter. CHORUS.
Pally, hinney, rush in't the crood an' shoot, for see the smoke an lows gets dense,
And luik for Jimmy, maw canny hinney, for the laddie hez no sense,
But there's a crood o' men there, Mister, can aw claim yor attention,
Aw've lost maw darlin son, an what he's like aw'll mention—
He's no scholar, bliss the laddie! but he smokes an' chows,
He's parshall ti military movements, espeshly Sangate rows;
He's gat his *millishor* claes on, thou'll ken him iv a crack,
Besides sum stripes for gud behavor, but they put them on his back.
His appearance commands respect—hae ye seem him gannin by;
The skin's off his knockles wi' fightin, an he sports a lairge black eye! CHORUS. [23]

Corvan had nothing but contempt for policemen like Ralph Little.

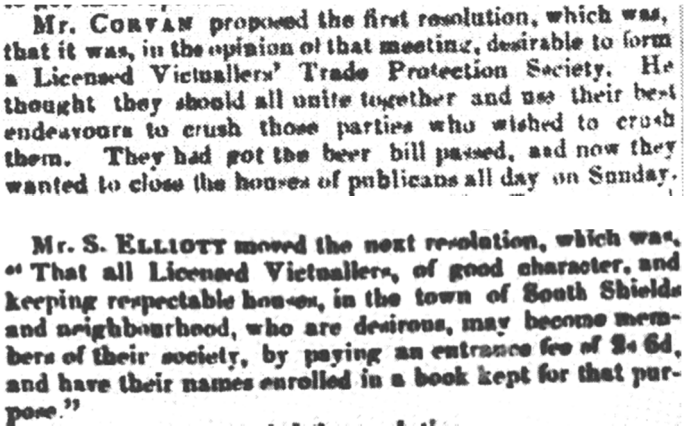
John Billings had managed the Royal Music Hall in Hartlepool,[24] and now managed the Neptune Music Hall, where Mrs Billings sang.[25] In November Billings advertised in the *Newcastle Courant* that performers could seek engagements at the New Music Hall in Nottingham by sending a postage stamp to him via 'Mr Corvan's Music Hall, Wapping Street, South Shields'.

In December, Balmbra chaired a Newcastle meeting of privates and non-commissioned officers of the Northumberland and Newcastle Yeomanry, who praised the 'gallant and heroic services of the army and navy' in the Crimea',[26] and he also chaired a meeting to organise collections for the 'Patriotic Fund'.[27] Early in 1855 the Newcastle LVA committee discussed the Beer Act with Thomas Headlam, one of the town's MPs.[28]

Corvan advertised in the local trade directory.

Fairles'
Arms
Music
Saloon!
EDWARD CORVAN, PROPRIETO
Open every evening at half-past 6 o'clock, with a talented com
The upper boxes are fitted-up in elegant style for the convenience of select
No Charge for Admission.—Refreshments of first-rate Qua
[29]

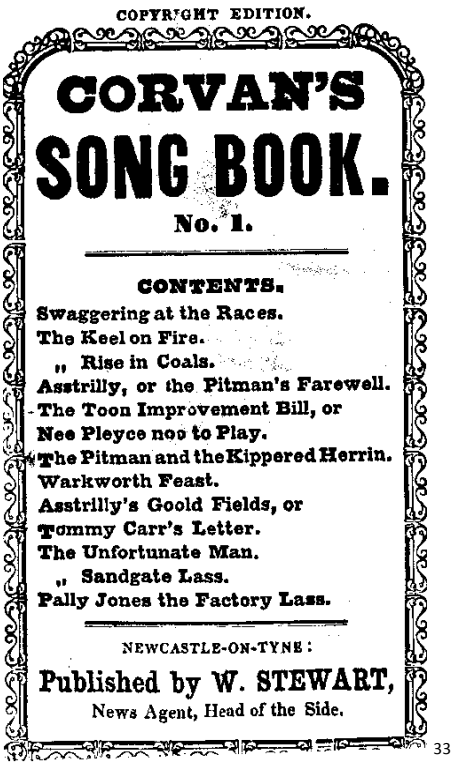
Days later Stephen Elliott, the licensee of the Sun in West Holborn,[30] and other South Shields publicans, met a deputation from the 140-strong North Shields LVA, and Elliott seconded Corvan's proposal.


Mr. CORVAN proposed the first resolution, which was, that it was, in the opinion of that meeting, desirable to form a Licensed Victuallers' Trade Protection Society. He thought they should all unite together and use their best endeavours to crush those parties who wished to crush them. They had got the beer bill passed, and now they wanted to close the houses of publicans all day on Sunday.

Mr. S. ELLIOTT moved the next resolution, which was, "That all Licensed Victuallers, of good character, and keeping respectable houses, in the town of South Shields and neighbourhood, who are desirous, may become members of their society, by paying an entrance fee of 2s 6d, and have their names enrolled in a book kept for that purpose."

The entrance fee was amended to 1s 6s and Corvan and Elliott were elected to the South Shields LVA committee.[31]

Within days William Reay Walker of the Steam Press Office in the Royal Arcade, Newcastle, advertised 'CORVAN'S SONGS in Three Penny Numbers', and William Stewart at 90, Head of the Side, announced that he was the publisher: 'Trade supplied'.[32] He had previously published all the lyrics in the first number, and eight had been printed twice, while *The Rise in Coals*, *The Sandgate Lass* and *Asstrilly*, *or the Pitman's Farewell*, had appeared three times. The song books named tunes, but *Warkworth Feast* lost part of its first chorus, 'toucher' became 'tutcher', and there were dozens of minor changes in other lyrics. In *Asstrilly* they included 'To' to 'Ti', 'aw' to 'a', 'four' to 'fower', 'shork' to 'shark', 'ne' to 'nae', and 'howk' to 'work'. There were no new songs in the second number, though a few had been reworked. Four had been printed twice and *He Wad Be a Noodle* four times. The third number contained three lyrics that had been published before, four of them twice, and *The Queen's Second Visit* three times.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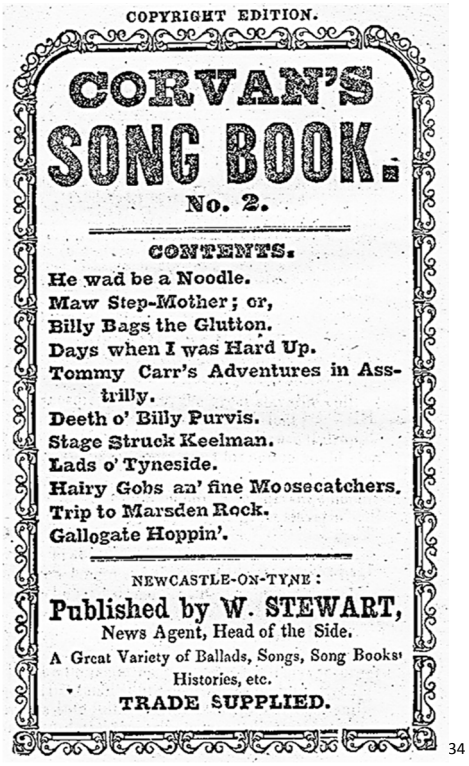
CORVAN'S
SONG BOOK.
No. 1.

CONTENTS.

Swaggering at the Races.
The Keel on Fire.
„ Rise in Coals.
Asstrilly, or the Pitman's Farewell.
The Toon Improvement Bill, or
Nee Pleyce noo to Play.
The Pitman and the Kippered Herrin.
Warkworth Feast.
Asstrilly's Goold Fields, or
Tommy Carr's Letter.
The Unfortunate Man.
„ Sandgate Lass.
Pally Jones the Factory Lass.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE:
Published by W. STEWART,
News Agent, Head of the Side.

33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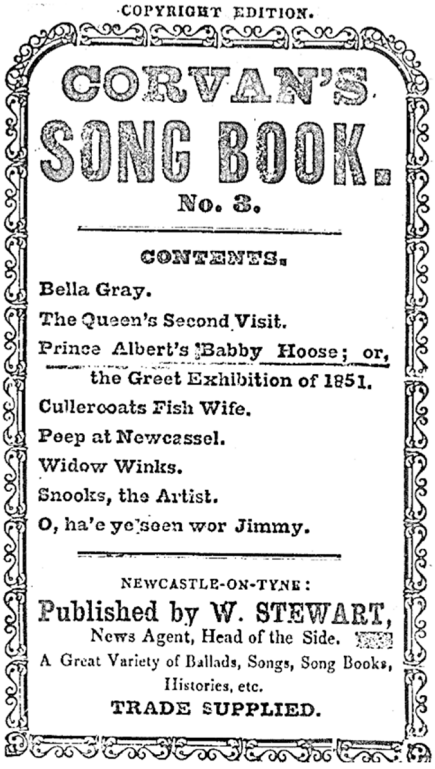
CORVAN'S
SONG BOOK.
No. 2.

CONTENTS.

He wad be a Noodle.
Maw Step-Mother; or,
Billy Bags the Glutton.
Days when I was Hard Up.
Tommy Carr's Adventures in Asstrilly.
Deeth o' Billy Purvis.
Stage Struck Keelman.
Lads o' Tyneside.
Hairy Gobs an' fine Moosecatchers.
Trip to Marsden Rock.
Gallogate Hoppin'.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE:
Published by W. STEWART,
News Agent, Head of the Side.
A Great Variety of Ballads, Songs, Song Books, Histories, etc.
TRADE SUPPLIED.

34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CORVAN'S
SONG BOOK.
No. 3.

CONTENTS.

Bella Gray.
The Queen's Second Visit.
Prince Albert's Babby Hoose; or, the Greet Exhibition of 1851.
Cullercoats Fish Wife.
Peep at Newcassel.
Widow Winks.
Snooks, the Artist.
O, ha'e ye seen wor Jimmy.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE:
Published by W. STEWART,
News Agent, Head of the Side.
A Great Variety of Ballads, Songs, Song Books, Histories, etc.
TRADE SUPPLIED.

WILSON'S
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
IN PARTS AT SIXPENCE EACH.
ILLUSTRATED EDITION
OF
BYRON'S WORKS,
IN MONTHLY PARTS, AT SIXPENCE EACH.
This is
THE FINEST EDITION
Of the noble Poet that has ever appeared.
The Paper, Print, and Illustrations, are beyond comparison.

London Journal, Family Herald, Lamp, Reynolds, Miscellany, and all the popular Periodicals of the day.

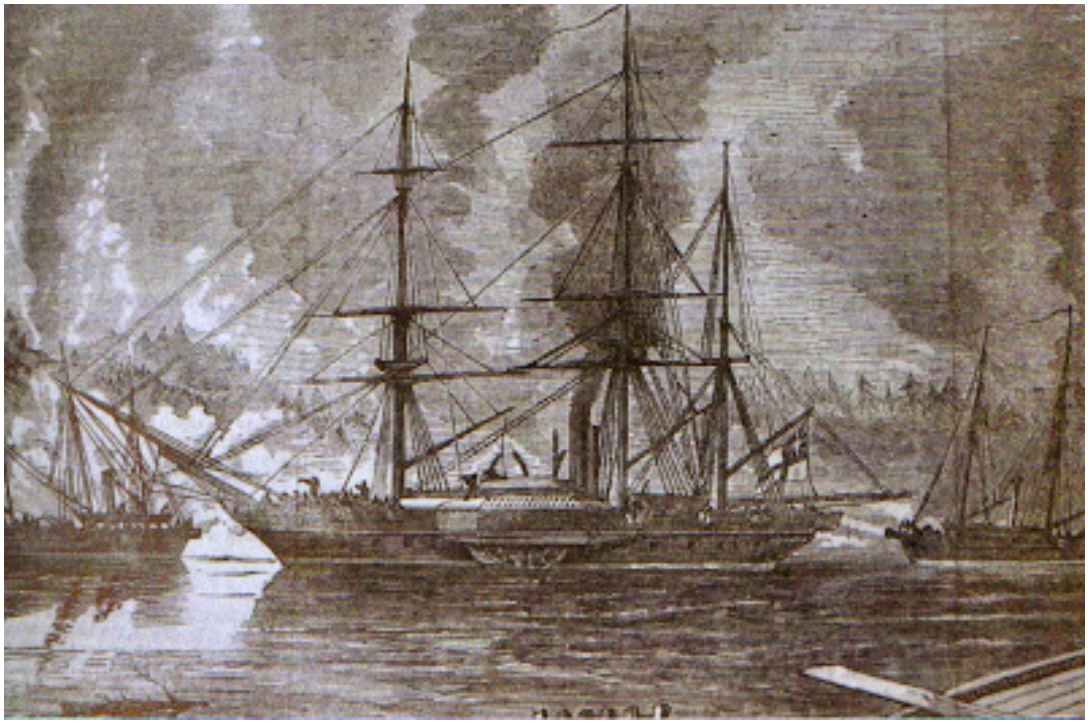
NEWSPAPERS:...
Newcastle Chronicle, on Friday Mornings; Guardian, on Friday Evenings and Saturday Mornings. Second Edition of the Guardian on Saturday Afternoons; Reynolds; Lloyds; News of the World; Telegraph; and all other Papers to order,
Songs for all and every One!
A Collection of nearly Fifteen Thousand!
Together with CORVAN'S single sheet Songs, and 3 Penny Numbers.

Sold by W. STEWART, Head of the Side, Newcastle.

Corvan had sung *O, ha'e ye seen wor Jimmy* 'with great applause upwards of 120 nights,'[35] but did not publish *The Fire on the Kee*. He was evidently keeping control of the copyright of his new lyrics, and several did not appear in print for seven years.

Walker's *Hawker's List* included school books, 'Children's Farthing Toy Books', and 24-page 'Penny Histories and Stories'. He had bound the ten numbers of *The Songs of the Tyne* as a 1s book, and sold most of Ross's 243 'Slip Songs' in quires (24 sheets), or 'transmitted' them 'through the post in the United Kingdom for 1d, rising to 8d for 21 to 26 quires and 2d more for every additional six quires. No. 234 was *The Battle of Inkerman*, which had taken place in November 1854, and the *List* also included 'Corvan's Songs, 24 pages, 6s per gross' (144),[36] so hawkers could make 100 per cent profit, but Corvan needed new songs and the Navy provided an inspiration.

HMS Bulldog was a sloop of 1,124 tons and had built for the Navy at Chatham in 1845. It had a wooden hull, but steam-driven paddles, and it carried six guns. During 1854 she had been sent to the Gulf of Finland and saw action at Kronstadt, the base of the tsar's Baltic Fleet near St. Petersburg.



37

She arrived on the Tyne in mid-December 1854, docked in North Shields late in January 1855, to have her engines refitted, then left for Plymouth in mid-February.[38] Corvan wrote *The Greet Bull Dog O' Shields*.

Wor Dick an' me last Curstmis day,
Tuik i' wor heeds to gan away,
Resolved te spend a yell week's pay
Amang the fokes o' Shields, man.
At Sandget end we had some yell,
Alang wi' Matt and Skipper Bell,
Then doon ti Sheels a' hands did speel,
I' skipper Johnson's braw new keel,
'Twas there aw hard young Geordy Carr,
That kens se much aboot the Czar,
Say "what d'ye think's come frae the war,
But a greet Bull-dog at Sheels, man?
Fall de dall, &c.

Says aw thou's leein fond aw's sure,
Yor idees mun be varry poor,
Thou wants to put on Tommy Moor,
Wi' yor greet bull-dog o' Sheels, man.
What, a bull-dog swalley Rooshin bears,
That's nobbit lees, cum speak for fairs.
He says then lissen ti' what comes—
He fired het snowballs at thor bums,
He peppered them all at Bummy Soond,
An' laid thor batteries wi' the groond,
That varry Bull-dog may now be foond,
Lyin' in Peggy Hole i' Sheels, man.

Give ow'r says aw, wi' voice se gruff,
Or suen, by gox, aw may ye huff,
Wi' fiery snawballs me ti stuff
An' yor greet Bull-dog o' Sheels, man.
Think weel, maw man, wi' whe ye play,
The fuil he laff'd, an' quick did say.
But mair than that, the dog lies reet
Chocked full o' guns and men complete,
He tuik Charley Napier' tars an all
Ti Bummy Soond wi' Captain Hall,
And feyred them shells that made them squall
Did this greet Bull-dog o' Sheels, man.

He nipt thor tails and myed they shoot,
An' just like badgers drawed them oot,
He worried thor throppies wiv his snoot,
Did this greet Bull-dog o' Sheels, man,
He fired them bullets het and thick,
Sayin' there's some pills and Mister Nick.
He meyd them scamper duce'd quick,
An' levelled ivery steyn an' brick,
He myed their nasty tallow run,
Then wagg'd his tail an' barked like fun,
An' cam ti the Tyne when aw was duin,
Did this greet Bull Dog o' Sheels, man.

Says aw, thou's stuffin me maw man,
But when aw lands aw's sure ti gan,
An find this Bull-dog iv aw can,
That's myekin sic wark at Sheels, man.
So when aw landed on the kee,
Away aw gans quite full o' glee,
Ti' try and find this Bull-dog breed,
But hang a Bull-dog there aw se'd,
So aw axed a sailor stannin there,
Iv he saw a bull-dog ony where,
He gyeped and glower'd an' gave a blair.

Spoken.—An let flee a chow o' baccy iz big iz a tarmit—so aw set's Nettle on tiv him (that's maw terrier) iv he was a Bull-dog Nettle maniged him. As for me, aw trotted, cas there was a dozen bull-dogs i' nee time, an' nivor stopt tiv aw went bump agyen the wooden dolly—aw thowt it was Jarrow. Wi that aw heers the sailors bawl oot—hie, shipmate, a hoy! shipmate, the deevil says aw—

(Sings) D' ye think we're fuils o' Sheels, man.

Sair vexed, begox! aw kept gawn back,
Determined Skipper Carr ti smack,
And let him see that aw cud snack,
Wiv ony bull-dog o' Sheels, man.
But, hinny, marrows, guess maw surprise,
When aw twigs a steamboat sic a size,
Men an gans aw did disarn,
Wiv B double LL bull-dog on her starn,
Aw seed her bonny colours flyin',
Wi' sowlgers and sailors exercisin,
And sure enyuf the Bull-dog wis lyin'
I' Peggy's Hole in Sheels, man.

Noo, may Sheels prosper, while the sea
Beats on her shores so wild and free,
May they niver lack prosperity
Nor manly hearts i' Sheels, man;
May blissins crown each happy home,
Wor sailors, tee, where'er they roam.
May we ever on old England's shore,
Boast British Bull-dogs ever more,
Aw wish success tiv aw that's here,
May ye nivor want good health or cheer,
Smash! aw hope ye'll live for mony a year,
Wi' greet Bull-dogs o' Sheels, man.

The tune Corvan called *Hokey Pokey* was better-known as *The King of the Cannibal Isles*.[39]

The membership of Newcastle LVA had reached 150,[40] but John Ricardo, a member of Balmbra's '*corps musicale*', was found guilty of creating 'a disturbance in the public streets' and fined 2s 6d. In South Shields Stephen Elliott was found guilty of 'allowing card playing' on a Sunday and fined 10s and costs.[41] On 1 March Isabella Corvan gave birth to a girl at the Fairles Arms, and the Registrar described Isabella junior's father as a 'Publican'.

162	First March 1855 Wapping street South Shields	Isabella	Girl	Edward Corvan	Isabella Corvan formerly Arrowsmith	Publican	Edwd Corvan Father Wapping street South Shields	Twenty Ninth March 1855	R. Th. Ridley Registrar	

It may have been at this time that Corvan gave his wife a gold brooch containing plaited wisps of their hair, but only a blurred image has been traced.

42

The pressure to look 'respectable' and act within the law at all times was increasing.

In Newcastle someone stole oats from the Wheat Sheaf yard,[43] and four valuable paintings went missing from inside the Inn, for which woman was sentenced to two months of hard labour. A man called for a glass of whiskey at the bar, but tendered a 'bad sixpence'. An hour later he returned, called for another whiskey and tendered a second bad sixpence, so Balmbra called a policeman. He found no more counterfeit money, but on the way to the police station Balmbra noticed that the man threw 'something away which made a "jink"', and he was subsequently sentenced to six months of hard labour. In April Newcastle, North Shields, South Shields and Sunderland LVA's amalgamated and elected Balmbra as president, but neither Corvan nor Elliott represented South Shields publicans.[44] In North Shields William Campbell offered to supply soda water with 'TERMS LIBERAL FOR CASH,' but on 1 May his Music Saloon at the Northumberland Arms in Bedford Street burned down. The owners had insured it for £300, and Campbell was elsewhere at the time, but had insured his furniture and effects for £400.[45]

Robert Howard had made only £20 at the Olympic between February and December in 1853 and had mortgaged the 'effects' to two men for £81. In spring 1854 he mortgaged the same 'effects' to another man. He owed £200 and left for Bristol with £9 in cash, but pawned some jewellery for £11 and got his brother-in-law to loan him £50. Howard rented the Royal Coliseum Theatre in Marsh Street for £100 a year, and builders 'fitted it up'. The Royal Coliseum Music Hall opened in May, with seats costing 3d and 6d, including 'refreshments', but days later a Newcastle creditor summonsed him for £4. Howard was sentenced to 21 days in jail, but paid off the debt and went free. By November he had made £10 profit and owed the builders £50 to £60, and was imprisoned for debt.[46] In January 1855 'The ROYAL OLYMPIC, late the Racket Court' in Newcastle was available for let 'by the night, week, month or year'.[47] Howard appeared in Bristol's Insolvent Debtors' Court in March,[48] and was sentenced to six more months in prison.[49]

In May two advertisements appeared in *The Era*.

TO LET, with immediate possession, the excellent CONCERT HALL, known as the ROYAL OLYMPIC, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, including Fittings, Stage Scenery, Chandeliers, Metres, Gas Fittings, Promenade, Seats, &c. The premises consist of a Concert Hall, capable of holding 1,500 persons; a Bar Room, or Parlour, and a Billiard Room (with Table therein) up stairs, and a Large Room and Kitchen and three Lodging-rooms on the ground floor, and a piece of ground detached suitable for a quoit and skittle ground.
Apply to Mr. FORSTER, 42, Westgate-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—FAIRLESS ARMS MUSIC HALL.—Proprietor, Mr. EDWARD CORVAN.
The above Music Hall has been very well attended, considering the times. The reigning favourites are a Mr. and Mrs Douglas, who nightly elicit immense applause.
Corvan's Local Hits go down as usual. [50]

Some South Shields Irishmen were considerably less respectable.

Late in May around 40 Irishmen fought police and locals in a drinking tent at South Shields races and one man told the police that Peter Campbell, an Irish beer-house keeper, had knocked him down with a bludgeon and treated a dumb boy even more brutally. When police reinforcements arrived, they injured three Irishmen seriously, wounded another 26, arrested 33, and confiscated a horse pistol, two other guns and a cutlass. One Irishman died next day and another was taken to Newcastle Infirmary. Nine Irishmen subsequently received prison sentences of from three to eight months at Newcastle Assizes and South Shields magistrates banned future races.[51]

In June John Billings tried to revive the Olympic.

NOTICE TO SINGERS, DANCERS, ACROBATIC AND BALLET PERFORMERS.—MR. JOHN BILLINGS begs most respectfully to inform the professional Ladies and Gentlemen, that he intends OPENING the ROYAL OLYMPIC MUSIC HALL, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Saturday Evening, June the 9th, 1866, with a powerful and talented Company of Male and Female Artistes. He also begs to state that he will want an entire Company for the Opening.
All applications to be made to Mr. JOHN BILLINGS, at the Royal Olympic Music Hall, Newgate-street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. All letters addressed as above, enclosing a Postage-stamp, will meet with prompt attention. All parties engaged will be required to be at Rehearsal on Saturday, the 9th, at Twelve o'clock.

James Spiers had a 'bumper' benefit at the Wheat Sheaf and a Mr Mercer opened the Black Swan Music Hall in Westgate Street.[52] In Sunderland, Corvan's former printer, Thomas Thompson, had assets of £1,471, including the copyright of J.P. Robson's biography of Billy Purvis, valued at £5, but debts of £1,744, and was bankrupted.[53]

Parliament had increased Sunday opening hours at licensed premises from 12.30 to 3.00pm and 5.00pm to 11.00pm,[54] but in August Superintendent Buglass told the South Shields magistrates that the Fairles Arms and Edward Perrin's Commercial Hotel in Long Row were 'nests of crime' where 'every species of debauchery existed, to the destruction of the morals of the youth of both sexes', and the magistrates declined to renew their licences.[55] In October Newcastle LVA refused to accept Corvan's offer of singing at their meeting in the Assembly Rooms, since it 'interfered' with the programme which involved someone else singing *Canny Newcassel* and 'Mr Sessford' rendering *The Old Cliffs of Tynemouth*.[56] In November William Campbell was a 'SODA WATER, LEMONADE, GINGER BEER, and CORDIAL MANUFACTURER' in North Shields, and also sold 'Ponies, Spring Carts, and Harness'.[57] Corvan, 'The Tyneside Comedian', advertised in the *Newcastle Guardian* that his engagements at the 'glorious Chemical Works Reading Room' had 'induced him to pay another visit', along with Mr Dwight, the 'celebrated dancer', and other 'Artists of Merit'. In December 'Mr Edward Corvan' informed his 'Friends in "Canny Newcassel" and elsewhere that he still retains his licence, the report to the contrary being dales – "A weak invention of the enemy"'. His Concert Hall was open every evening with Mr & Mrs Dwight, James Spiers and other performers, but 'Parties calling at the Fairless Arms' would 'find Mr Corvan out'.[58] Soon after Spiers found Francis Taylor, the wife of a pitman currently in Australia, holding certain articles in a Fairles Arms bedroom, and Isabella Corvan noticed that blankets had been pushed onto the floor. In court Taylor claimed she had bought the articles,[59] but the *Morpeth Herald* noted that she had attempted to get under the bed.[60] Presumably, she was found guilty; but Corvan had decided to go back on the road.

9. Cat-Gut Jim

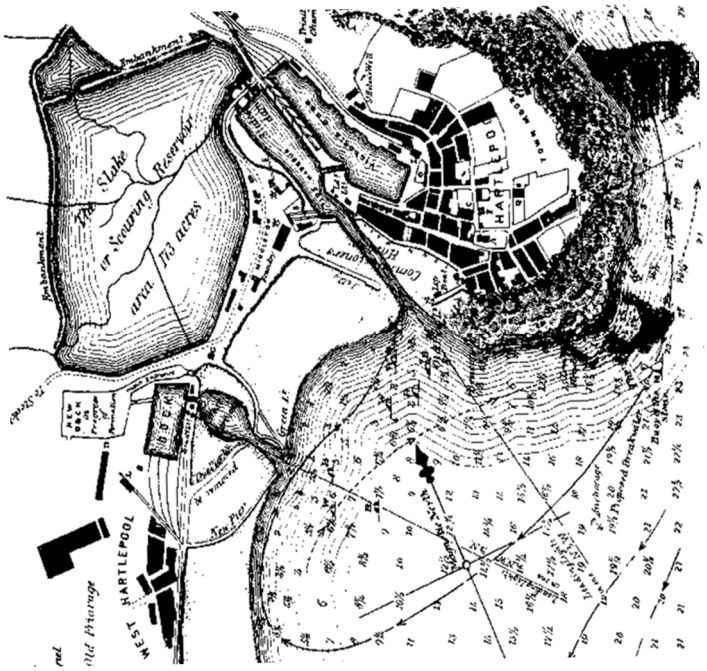
Ned Corvan painted 'sacred events' in the apocalyptical style of John Martin,[1] but he also painted 'Billy Purvis Stealing the Bundle' outside a tavern on Newcastle Town Moor, and he signed another version as 'NED CORVAN/PAINTER'.

2

3

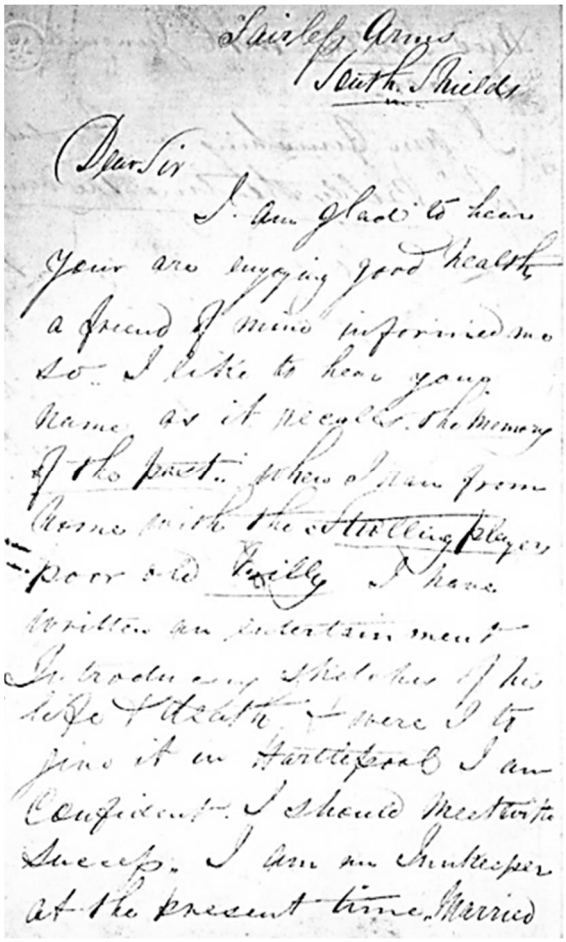
Corvan probably painted the second version in 1855, and he evidently thought a lot about Purvis, who was buried in Hartlepool.

By 1851 Old Hartlepool had a rail connection to the main line and its docks were larger than those at West Hartlepool.[4]



In 1852 West Hartlepool became a separate chapelry and the Harbour and Railway Company opened another dock. Railway lines ran to Yorkshire and Lancashire and another new dock was planned. In 1854 the port shipped 700,000 tons of coal and coke and by 1855 more colliers left there than any other north east port;[5] but over a third of London's coal arrived by rail.[6]

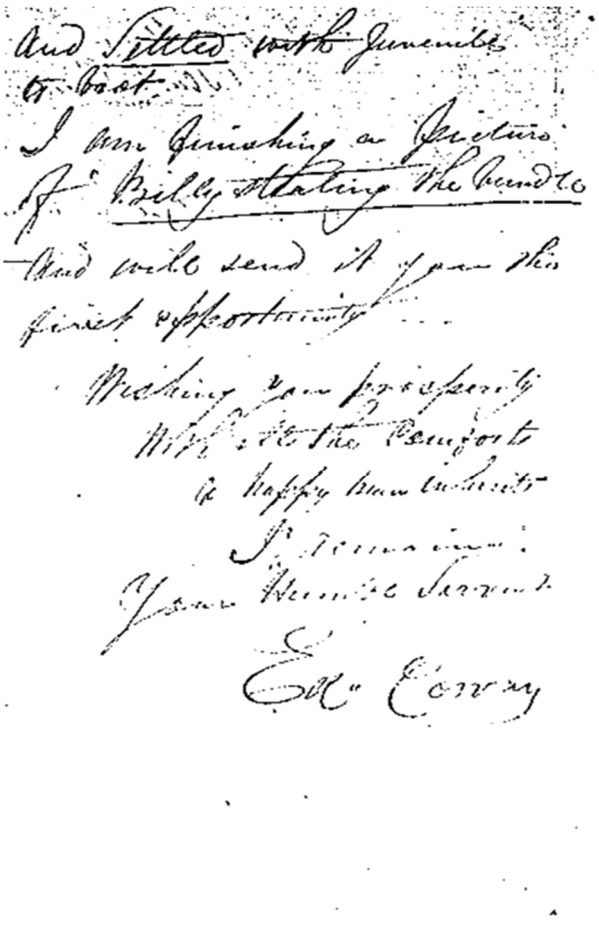
Late that year Corvan wrote to John Procter, Billy Purvis's former printer in Old Hartlepool.



Sailors Arms
South Shields

Dear Sir

I am glad to hear
your are enjoying good health
a friend of mine informed me
so. I like to hear your
name as it recalls the memory
of the past. I have seen your
name with the strolling players
poor old Billy I have
written an entertainment
to introduce my Sketches if he
be still alive & there is to
join it in Hartlepool & I am
confident I should meet with
success. I am in Shutlesper
at the present time Married



And settled with Juvenile
& Boat
I am finishing a Lecture
for Billy Purvis the Round O
And will send it you the
first opportunity . . .

Wishing you prosperity
With all the Comforts
& happy Xmas & Christ

I remain
Your Humble Servant
Jno Corvan

7

In December Procter's poster indicated that seats in Hartlepool Town Hall would cost 1s at the front and 6d at the back, but there were none for 3d as in Purvis's days.

TOWN HALL, HARTLEPOOL

On Wednesday, Dec. 19, 1855

GRAND ORIGINAL

TYNESIDE ENTERTAINMENT!

Under Distinguished Patronage.

MR. E. CORVAN

THE CELEBRATED TYNESIDE POET, VOCALIST, & JESTER,

Will have the honor of appearing, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HARTLEPOOL, in the above HUMOUROUS ENTERTAINMENT, assisted by

MR. J. H. SPIERS,

The Popular Irish Comedian.

PROGRAMME.—PART FIRST.

Bonny Coaly Tyne—The Keelmen in difficulties—MARROWS, am gaun ti leave ye.

Original Song, "Australly's Geold Fields," Mr. Cervan.

Tommy Carr's Letter—The Unfortunate Pe de—a Taste for the Drama—Recollections of

Billy Purvis

Song, Original, "Billy's Death," Mr. CORVAN.

Imitations of Performers—THE BUNDLE—A make-up for a Highland Chief—Song, Original,

"Snook, the Artist,"

Introducing a correct Portrait of Old Billy—The Russian Emperor, &c.—Musical Ideas—A Word about the Pea Straw.

Violin Solo, "Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me," "We Sailed from the Downs."

This will conclude the First Part of Mr. CORVAN'S Entertainment.

GRAND SCOTCH & IRISH ENTERTAINMENT

Mr. J. H. SPIERS, the Popular Eccentric Comedian.

PART SECOND.

Mr. E. CORVAN.—The Tyneside Factory Lass—Carlin Sunday—Cuckoo Jack—Grappling for Perpetual Motion.

Song, "Am Sweet Siventeen," Mr. CORVAN.

With Inimitable Sketches of Tyneside Life—The Moosecathers, or Hairy Gobs—with a Short Lecture.

Song Original, "Hairy Gobs," Mr. CORVAN. Grand Dialogue Song, Mr. CORVAN.—CAT GUT JIM—the Street Minstrel, in which Mr. C. will introduce the following Solos, &c.:—"Far upon the Sea," "Annie Lawrie," "Auld Robin Gray," "Exile of Erin," "Imitation of the Bagpipes," &c.

ADMITTANCE.—FRONT SEATS, 1s.; BACK SEATS, 6d.

Doors open at Seven o'clock, to commence at Half-past.

J. PROCTER, Printer, High Street, Hartlepool, and Church Street, West Hartlepool.

8

Am Sweet Siventeen was the beginning of the first line of *The Sandgate Lass*, and while *The Unfortunate Pe De*, *Bonny Coaly Tyne*, *The Keelmen in Difficulties*, *A Taste for the Drama*, *Carlin Sunday*, *Cuckoo Jack* and *Grappling for Perpetual Motion* and have not been traced, this was the earliest-known performance of *Cat-Gut Jim*.

Aw'm Cat-gut Jim, the fiddler, a man o' greet renoon,
Aw play ti myek me livin', lads, in courtry an' in toon;
Tiv ivery fair an' ivery feast wi' maw fiddle aw repair:
Gox! where there's ony fun or sport, thou's sure ti fynd me there.

CHORUS.

For aw drive away dull care, aw drive away dull care,
So patronize poor Cut-gut Jim, when ye've ony cash to spare.

Aw'l play ye ony tuen ye like, aw'l play ye "Cheer, boys, Cheer,"
Or ti try an' keep yor spirits up aw'l play the "Drop o' Beer,"
The "Deevil amang the Tailors," "Peggy Pickin, doon the shore,"
The "Lass that loves a Sailor," an' mony a dozen more.

CHORUS.

Aw play "Mary Blane," an' "Lucy Neal," wi "Poor old Uncle Ned,"
"O! Nanny, wilt thou gang wi me," "Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled;"
Aw play McCloud's reel beautiful, "What are ye gawn to Stand,"
The "Keel Row" shaken a' ti rags, o'er this happy, unhappy land.

SPOKEN.—Ony thing frev au Elephant's trunk tiv a Lucifer Match Box. Uz street fiddlors fynds times queer just now—customers bad ti fynd—but iv a' the customers aw meet, gie me the Sailors, them's the boys!—the bulwarks ov owld England. Aw'm a sailor; ye can see by the cut o' me gib. Aw served me time ti be a shipowner abord o' the Dredger—What a gun-boat the Dredger 'id myek—When they run short o' cannon balls they cud fire coal-skuttles at the eneny. And then they're always weel supplied wi' Newcastle amonishen—clarts. That's the stuff ti blind the enemy. Aw knaw a vast aboot the sea, but the next time aw gan it 'll be iv a cab. Yes! aw'l hev a luik at it. Still aw'm fond o' sailors; when aw sees yen aw generally play "Far upon the Sea."—(Play "Far upon the Sea" here.)—When aw see an Irishman, them's the boys! Hatre geuns men—They give tuppence if they hevent a fardin i' their pockets. Aw generally play them the "Exile of Erin" an' "Patrick's Days," one's full o' human nator, an' the other's full o' shillalehs an' lifo presarvors—them's the things for layin' a foundation for stickin plaster.—(Plays the airs mentioned.)—When aw see a Scotchman aw play "Auld Robin Gray" on the bagpipes, efter the style o' Sir Colin Campbell, "Ye deils Buckie."—(Play here)—But when aw join the Fish-wives—them's the boys! aw play them "Pop goes the Weasel," efter the style o' Sir Walter Railly when he tossed a chow o' baccy at Queen Elizabeth.—(Plays.)

CHORUS.

For aw drive away dull care, aw drive away dull care,
So patronize poor Cat-gut Jim when ye've ony cash to spare, [9]

Corvan set it to a tune of *An' sae will we yet*, which Bobby Nunn had used, but did not publish the lyrics for seven years.

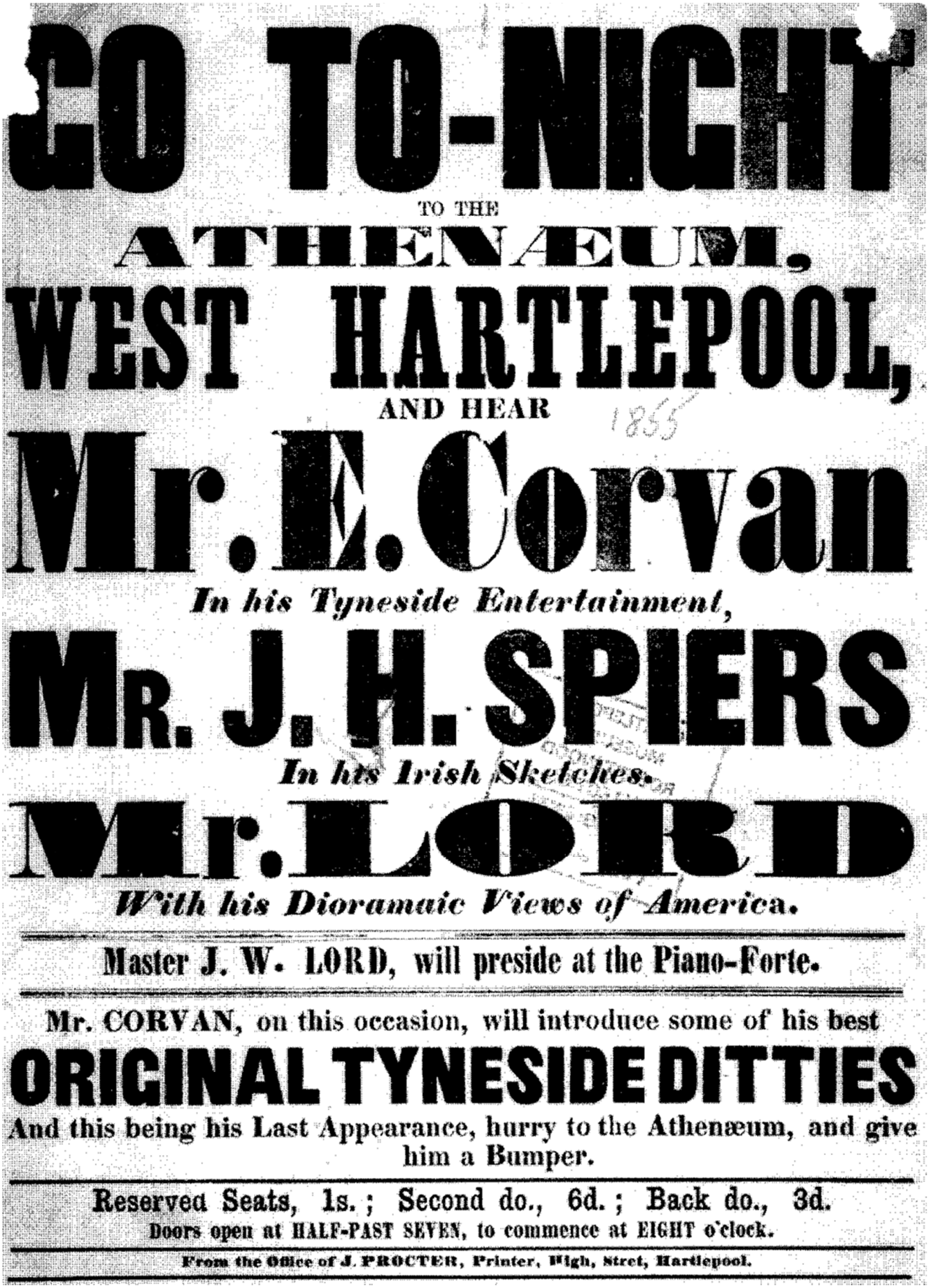
The Town Hall was a century old and housed a public library, a 'news room', and a court room about 15 metres by seven.

[10]

The Athenaeum had opened in Church Street in 1852,[11] and an upper room, 21 metres by nine,[12] was 'fitted up as a theatre'.[13]

[14]

Procter's poster for Corvan and Spiers' final Hartlepool performance advertised back seats at 3d.



GO TO-NIGHT

TO THE

ATHENÆUM,

WEST HARTLEPOOL,

AND HEAR

1855

Mr. E. Corvan

In his Tyneside Entertainment,

MR. J. H. SPIERS

In his Irish Sketches.

Mr. LORD

With his Dioramaic Views of America.

Master J. W. LORD, will preside at the Piano-Forte.

Mr. CORVAN, on this occasion, will introduce some of his best

ORIGINAL TYNESIDE DITTIES

And this being his Last Appearance, hurry to the Athenæum, and give him a Bumper.

Reserved Seats, 1s.; Second do., 6d.; Back do., 3d.

Doors open at HALF-PAST SEVEN, to commence at EIGHT o'clock.

From the Office of J. PROCTER, Printer, High, Stret, Hartlepool.

15

Corvan returned to South Shields by New Year's Eve and advertised in the *Shields Daily Gazette*.

TREAT FOR THE NEW YEAR'S WEEK.
NOW Exhibiting at Mr. EDWARD CORVAN'S Music Hall, Wapping Street, South Shields, Mr LORD'S DIORAMA of AMERICA. Mr Lord being engaged for one Week only, the Public of Shields are respectfully invited to avail themselves of the opportunity of witnessing a first class Exhibition, by an EARLY VISIT.—Private Boxes.—Admission Free.

By March Corvan had engaged 'living statues', and the women sometimes dressed so as to appear nude.

CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL, WAPPING STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS.
MAGNIFICENT BLAZE OF ATTRACTION!!
ENGAGEMENT OF PROFESSOR & MADAME LAWRENCE.
WHO will appear every evening, in conjunction with their inimitable *Troupe* of POSES PLASTIQUES, in their Beautiful and Classical WALLHALA ENTERTAINMENTS. Being the greatest treat ever offered to the Inhabitants of South Shields. Admittance by Refreshment Tickets only. Parties the least tipsy not admitted.
☞ AN ACTIVE LAD WANTED AS WAITER.
EDWARD CORVAN, Proprietor. [16]

Days later South Shields magistrates fined Stephen Elliott 10s and costs for being 'open after hours on Saturday night'.[17]

John Sessford performed at Newcastle Theatre Royal,[18] as a 'local and sentimental singer', and in concerts associated with Mr Springthorpe's waxworks and at Nelson Street Music Hall, where 'Ladies and Gentlemen' paid 6d and 'the Working Classes and Children' 3d.[19] Charles Easthope had been the leading Wheat Sheaf violinist, but Balmbra advertised for a replacement 'who can read at sight and thoroughly understand Concert Room business. None but steady men need apply, and testimonials required'. Applications, 'stating lowest terms, with stamped and directed envelope, will meet with prompt attention'.[20]

Professor and Madame Lawrence, 'assisted by Mr. Corvan', were at a 'numerously attended' Stockton Theatre.[21] In June Corvan engaged artistes who had been at Balmbra's,[22] and found a pianist for his 'Royal Music Saloon' by July.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—ROYAL MUSIC SALOON, WAPPING-STREET.—(Proprietor, Mr. E. Corvan.)—Immense attraction. First-rate Company. Crowded houses to witness the triumphant success of Messrs. Collis and Flitcroft, R. Knowles, and the celebrated Characteristic Singer and Dancer, Miss Wade, together with Corvan himself, the unapproachable Tyneside Clown, and a host of talent. Violinist, Mr. J. W. Ross.
WANTED, a GOOD PIANIST, one thoroughly acquainted with Concert-room business. A Lady preferred, one who could Sing. To commence on Monday, June 30. Address as above, enclosing stamp for reply. Situation permanent if suitable. [23]

CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL,
WAPPING STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS.
IMMENSE Reception of Mdlle. JOSEPHINE ALDINA, Pianist and Vocalist, from the Royal Academy of Music, Paris; also, Miss ROBIE, Dansue, from the Theatre Royal, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The remainder of the Company includes COLLIS and FLITCROFT, Negro Life; R. KNOWLES, Lancashire Dialect Singer; Miss WADE, Characteristic; Mr HELLAN, Sentimental; Mr E. CORVAN, Tyneside Comic, the whole forming an Evening's Amusement not to be equalled in England.
REFRESHMENTS TO SUIT ALL PARTIES. [24]

Sessford sang at Swalwell and Derwenthaugh Institute's soiree and ball,[25] but after Orangemen met at the Black Swan in Newcastle, and marched through the Irish Catholic district of Felling with bands, Catholics were blamed for the violence.[26] In August Balmbra engaged Thomas and Henry Handford, 'delineators of Nigger life and character', gave them a benefit and re-booked them.[27]

The *Shields Daily Gazette* announced that 'CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL' had a 'Band of SERENADERS every Evening. Admission Free';[28] but in October the *Morpeth Herald* noted that 'the celebrated Mr. Corvan, singer of the Melodies of Tyneside, and who is famed for his sketches of Northumberland & Durham character, intends visiting this Town', and 'there is no fear of his obtaining a full house'.[29] In North Shields William Campbell sold glasses of spirits 'over the Counter' for 3d, and 2½d for outdoor consumption, or 1s 8d a pint and 18s a gallon, at the Clock Vaults in Clive Street,[30] but the premises were up for sale.

FREEHOLD PROPERTY, FOR SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION (If not previously disposed of by Private Contract, of which due notice will be given). Mr HORNSBY, has received Instructions from the Proprietor to Sell at the house of Mr Campbell, Globe Inn, Clive Street, North Shields, on Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1856, at 6 o'Clock in the Evening, all that Substantial FREEHOLD SODA WATER MANUFACTORY, Dwelling Houses, and Yard connected therewith situate in Camden Lane, North Shields, now in the occupation of Mr Campbell, and others: consisting of Nine Rooms, with all necessary outoffices, and let to respectable Tenants, at the Yearly Rental of £35. [31]

In November Corvan advertised the 'Immense reception of the Juvenile Wonders, Master and Miss Roberts, who are nightly greeted with thunders of applause from a crowded and delighted audience', and he 'Should like to hear from Mr. William Erskine, Violinist'. *The Era* noted that at the Handford brothers' benefit at Balmbra's in Newcastle 'every available place was filled to overflowing, a certain proof of what good catering will do, combined with such talent'.[32] South Shields magistrates fined Stephen Elliott 25s and costs, and other publicans lesser amounts, 'for allowing dancing and other disorderly conduct in their houses' on a Monday night.[33] In December Corvan claimed that he had been to the USA and back in a week, but faced competition from a circus which had the support of local freemasons, so he advertised new songs and engaged sword dancers.

CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL.—The Marco Polo Beat.—Mr Ed. CORVAN informs his inquisitive friends, that he has just returned from America, after a week's absence with an entirely original Budget of Comic Songs. Notice.—The Sword Dancers will perform at 8 o'Clock. [34]

The Era described Balmbra's in Newcastle as a 'popular place of amusement' with 'a fair amount of patronage'.

In January 1857 Julia Harcourt gave the Wheat Sheaf as her postal address, and the hall was 'well attended',[35] but a Newcastle solicitor acknowledged that William Campbell was insolvent.

NOTICE is hereby given, that by an Indenture or Deed of Assignment, dated the 19th day of January, 1857, WILLIAM CAMPBELL, of North Shields, in the borough of Tynemouth, Publican, conveyed and assigned all his Estate and Effects unto Charles Miller, of North Shields aforesaid, Ironmonger, and Charles Foot, of Preston, in the said borough, Builder, upon certain trusts therein declared, for the benefit of all the Creditors of him, the said William Campbell; and the said Indenture or Deed of Assignment was duly executed on the day of the date thereof, by the said William Campbell, and by the said Charles Miller, and Charles Foot respectively; and such execution was attested by James Armstrong, of No. 13, Leazes-terrace, in the borough and county of the town of Newcastle upon Tyne, Solicitor; and Notice is hereby further given, that the said Indenture is now lying at our offices, at No. 10, Mosley-street, Newcastle upon Tyne aforesaid, for inspection and execution by the Creditors of the said William Campbell; and all Creditors who shall not execute such Indenture within three calendar months from the day of the date thereof, will be excluded from all benefit to arise therefrom.

P. & J. ARMSTRONG, Solicitors,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

Newcastle upon Tyne, Jan. 20, 1857. [36]

The proprietor of South Shields Theatre put on a 'COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT' for Campbell, with a play followed by a farce.[37]

In February Corvan performed in a benefit for a member of his company, and in March, after Stuart Henry Bell, 'a scenic artist of no mean repute', opened a new wooden theatre in North Shields,[38] Corvan engaged a top-class performer.

THE BEST DANCER IN THE WORLD.
CRABTREE,
AT CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL, WAPPING STREET.

MR. CRABTREE surpasses Booth, Millicent, Stokes, and Matthews, in fact he is acknowledged by the Press in London and the Provinces, THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD! And this Engagement being for 12 Nights only, Mr. Corvan hopes his patrons will rally round him, and bestow their appreciation and applause on his humble endeavours in thus catering for their Amusement. First time of the WAR IN CHINA, with new and beautiful Scenery, painted by Mr. Corvan. Characters by the Company, assisted by 12 Amateurs of South Shields. The Amusements defy competition, without a shade of Immorality attending, with the exception of being ONLY A CONCERT ROOM. The following Vocalists, &c., form the Company, viz.:—Mr. Crabtree, Mr. Wm. Brown, Mr. Element, Mr. Young, Mr. Corvan, Mr. Dearlove, Miss Hymer, Miss Stewart, Mrs. Dearlove. *Admission Free.* [39]

In April South Shields magistrates exercised powers that Newcastle magistrates evidently did not use.

Edward Corvan, publican, Wapping Street, was summoned for permitting dancing, &c., in his house on the evening of Good Friday. Sergeant Summerson proved the offence. Defendant contended that he was not violating the law. Mr. Balmbra's saloon at Newcastle he said was open. The bench said that they had nothing whatever to do with Newcastle. It was a violation of the law for a landlord to allow dancing in his house on Good Friday, and they fined defendant 20s and costs. [40]

In May Isabella Corvan engaged a solicitor and advertised in *The Era*.

SOUTH SHIELDS. — CORVAN'S MUSIC HALL TO LET.—The above Music Hall, with free Public-house, Shooting Gallery, &c., TO LET, and may be entered immediately. This is a rare chance for some enterprizing individual, the house being rent free, and situate in one of the most thriving Seaports in England. Terms, £60. The fixtures and part furniture to go with the house.
Apply to Mrs. E. Corvan, or Mr. Snowball, Solicitor, Barrington-street, South Shields. The Hall is open every night. [41]

In June an advertisement appeared in the *South Shields Gazette*.

TO LET, the FAIRLESS ARMS, Free Public House and Concert Hall. As the Proprietor wishes to treat with Parties as soon as possible, no useless enquiries will be attended to. [42]

Billy Thompson, a publican in Mill Bank,[43] was summonsed for 'keeping his house open at improper hours'. The police had found three men and a woman 'worse for drink', though they had none in front of them, and the magistrates dismissed the case.[44] Thompson, 'the legitimate and famous Local Delineator', sang some of J.P. Robson's songs in the 'Concert Hall of the *Fairless Arms*',[45] and William Campbell advertised for performers in North Shields in July.[46]

On 18 September Mary Jane Corvan was born at 51 Thornton Street, off Westgate, Newcastle. Isabella registered the birth on 15 October, making her mark, and gave her surname as 'Corven' and the father's occupation as 'Sail maker'.

69	Eighteenth September 1857 51 Thornton Street Westgate	Mary Jane	Girl	Edward Corven	Isabella Corven formerly Arrowsmith	Sail maker	The mark of Isabella Corven Mother 51 Thornton Street Newcastle upon Tyne	Fifteenth October 1857	George Wells Registrar

A leading temperance activist later claimed that Corvan was 'too fond of his glass, and too many sought his company', so after 'three or four years as publican and proprietor of Corvan's Music Hall' he 'gave it up' and 'returned to his local singing'.[47] Possibly around this time Corvan painted himself as the street-musician 'Cat-Gut Jim'.

[48]

Cat-Gut Jim had become his signature song.

10. The everlasting Ned Corvan

In 1856 the landlord of the Princes Saloon at the Fox and Goose Tavern in Sunderland High Street engaged London artistes and charged no admission, but barred women, and the New Music Hall at the Bull and Dog Inn, which was also in High Street, hosted a 'Grand local treat for the benefit of Mr. J. Sessford', the 'pianist, descriptive singer and local melodist' from Newcastle. In 1857 the hall was 'under the distinguished patronage of all honest working men' who paid 6d for a box seat and 3d for one in the 'Body of the Hall',[1] and the London star Sam Cowell performed at the town's Athenaeum Music Hall in October.[2]

In February Sessford sang at a Newcastle concert of Sir Henry Bishop's music,[3] and at a dinner for a Howard Street hotelier in March; but Charles Easthope's seven-year-old daughter died in Trafalgar Street.[4] In May the *Newcastle Journal* noted that Sessford was 'quite at home as basso' at a concert in aid of St. Andrew's National Schools, but his 'emphatic notes' might 'have been subdued a little'. In July he led a quadrille band at Bedlington Mechanics' Institute's annual soiree at the King's Arms,[5] and Easthope and others 'ably sustained their musical reputations' at a concert in support of St Paul's Church in Winlaton in September.[6] In October the 'blackface' Alabama Minstrels were at the Royal Music Saloon in Newcastle,[7] and they were still there in November when Balmbra advertised in the *Newcastle Courant*.

> Who seeks by music and poetry to promote virtue and truth, and aid in the progress of human improvement, as it gratifies the sense without weakening the reason. The great may cultivate it without debasement, and the good may enjoy it without depravation.

There were 'Select boxes for family parties' and '*No Disorderly Characters are admitted*'.[8] The leading violinist was Mr Sanders and the pianist was Mr Plumpton.[9]

India's war of independence had begun in May; and after the relief of Lucknow in September James Stead Edington saw Ned Corvan when he was 'the delight of the Old George Music Hall' in King Street, South Shields. Edington had 'listened to many raconteurs, but rarely seen one more highly gifted', and 'few who heard "The Relief of Lucknow" and the "Coffee Supper in Pudding Chare" will readily forget the beauty of the one, or the rollicking humour of the other, his mastery of the violin in the former, and the wit of the spoken dialect in the latter'.[10] Sadly, neither song has been traced.

After Nana Sahib, the leader of the Kanbur rebellion, had 30 English women beheaded,[11] British troops tied prisoners to canons and fired shells through them, but British papers focussed on Indian atrocities, and the narrator of Corvan's *Newcassel Pluck; or, Recruitin' for Delhi*, set to the tune of *The Tinkers Wedding,* appeared to believe the imperialist propaganda.

Come 'list wi' me ye jolly lads, for England's glory
come in squads,
And bid ta ta to mother an' dad, your sweethearts Jane
or Nelly, O.
Frae Sandgate an' the Kee, my boys, come leave
awhile your fuddlin' joys,
An' byest the rumps o' them Sepoys, for slawterin'
bairns in Delhi, O.

CHORUS.

Then list ye, lads, alang wi' me, 'mang Indian wars
what fun ye'll see,
Sepoys i' dozens, one, two, three, we'll tan thor hides
for Delhi, O.

Ye lads frae Gyetside an' the Burn, in wor ranks like
Briton's turn,
An' show wi' vengeance hoo ye mourn, the slawtered
wives at Delhi, O.
Wives an' bairns they thraw'd i' wells, cut up in pieces
papers tells—
Lads, n oo maw pluck and gizzard swells, to nawp thor
scaw for Delhi, O.

Chorus.

Thor's nae *luck noo* for sic a crew, thor murderin' tricks
mun end suin noo;
Wi' powther and ball thor ranks we'll hew, the mur-
derin' fiends i' Delhi, O.
Noo Nany Sahib thaw guts we'll bore, if some one
hesn't dune'd afore.

We'll stop yor butcherin' at Cawnpore, ye thunderin'
fiend o' Delhi, O.
Chorus.
Although for water we may parch, amang the jungle on
we ll march,
'Mang snakes an' tigers just to search for Nany Sahib
o' Delhi, O.
Aw'll suin bung up his goggle eyes, an' kill him twice
afore he dies;
Aw'll stuff him then, an' show maw prize in Balmbra's
Room frae Delhi, O.

SPOKEN.—Whe feels inclined te list? Noo, then, my brave bullies, while yor mi ltry pluck swells think iv the glorious life of a soldier who lives an' dies for his Queen and country; think about that chaps, an' rush at the shilling as ye wad at a basin o' soup or a yil o' Mackey's fourpenny. An' iv chance yor heads gets h'awn off ye get ticket o' leave an' a pension for the remainder o' yor lives. A soulger's life is a comfortable one; lots to eat when ye get it, and lots to drink sometimes, an' umbrie is to pur up in the field o' battle in case if comes on to rain. Think, what chaps, an' fall in—stand at ease—attention—fix bayonets—shoulder arms—right about face—quick march!

Chorus.

Noo toast each soulger an' his lass, to England's Queen
fill up each glass,
But niver let a moment pass, ti we wallop Sepoys frae
Delhi, O.
To Havelock's memory ever dear, and wor glorious
heroes give a cheer,
But gie us Tynesiders Mackey's beer—sowl, we'll
finish them i' Delhi, O!

Chorus.[12]

The threat to kill Sahib twice before he died, and the doubt that army recruits would live long enough to draw a pension, undermined the credibility of the narrator's apparently uncritical patriotism.

Corvan knew that Tyneside workers needed jobs, and he may well have seen the Newcastle artist John Wilson Carmichael's watercolour of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's massive steamship that was nearing completion on the Thames.

13

Corvan used the tune associated with *Great Big Irish Stew*, whose lyrics had been published in northern England,[14] and the narrator of *Bobby Walker's Visit to the Great Leviathan* hoped that Tyneside yards would build iron ships and create jobs.

Ye curious folks, noo list! awhile, an' some curious
things aw'll mention,
For curious things to cause a smile, aw consider a gooi
invenshun';
This world's a wonderful world folks say, progressin' an
improvin',
But still Leviathian schemes give way, when an iron shi
wants movin'.

CHORUS.

Then list! ye canny folks to me,
Begum aw'll let nought slip, sir,
Consarnin' this monster for the sea,
The Leviathian iron ship, sirs.

'Boot Parymids an' Babel toors, aw've read tiv aw kept
mi breeth in,
But soul, aw stacker'd thunnerstruck, when aw saw the
greet Leviathian;
Aw've read the 'Rabian Nights twice ewer, an' boot Noah
Ark, a good 'un,
Noo Brunnel's idea was an iron ark, Noah's idea was a
wood 'un.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

Six hundred an' eighty feet in length, an' eighty three
feet wide, sirs,
Wi' screws an' engins' o' mighty strength. ti work agyen
wind an' tide, sirs;
As big as Earl Gray's monument, ye'll fynd oot ivery
funnel,
Man, to luik at her twice, she'll make ye squint; ita
fact, ax Mr. Brunnel.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

Ten thoosand tons ov iron plate, an' fifty-five each anchor,
Work'd wi' three million rivets, shuv that i' yor peyte,
Then forst i' the world ye'll rank her;
I say she'll hawd ten thoosand troops, ti fight for
Briton's glory,
For begums her like in might an' height, was niver heard
in story.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

They say they've planted trees on board, may beleef that
surely hardens,
But she hez a place for cheps to run, as big as Jesmond
Gardens;
Twenty miles an hoor, noo that's hor speed, they say, be-
fore they try hor,
Gox. wi' canvas an' steem, its queer indeed, if ony thing
gets by her.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

Ivery convenience she hez on board, of mighty weight
an' structur',
Wi' scores of invenshuns an' 'lectric lects on mast-heeds
ti conduct hor;
Gas yairds on board ti myek thor gas, they say she hez
provided,
Wey, all's forst-rate, but the launch, an' that she gat for-
ward slow, one-sided.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

Noo let us hope this Leviathian scheme success suen will
be givin',
An' that honest men may niver want work ti gain an
honest livin';
Success attend wor iron trade, wi' the coal trade hand in
hand, sirs
'Mang Tyneside hearts, an' Tyneside homes, wor Queen
an' native land, sirs.

CHORUS—Then list, etc.

15

Once again, Corvan supported every man who wanted to make an honest living.

In December Mrs Balmbra refused to let a 60-year-old woman into her house in Elswick Terrace, because she had had a drink, and the woman drowned herself.[16] The St. Nicholas' Church organist praised the singer Thomas Boutland for his 'excellent Vocal Powers', 'punctuality, attention, and conduct', and in December at a farewell concert in the Music Hall, Nelson

Street, 'the principal Talent of the various Choirs in the town and country' was 'under the distinguished patronage of The Mayor, Sherriff and Corporation'. The programme included *The Christmas Carol and Chorus*, Miss Boutland would sing an 'Irish Ballad' and the 'company' was to perform *Cheer Boys, Cheer*. Mr Boutland would sing 'the celebrated Music of MACBETH' and the evening would end with *Unto us a Child is Born*, Händel's *Hallelujah Chorus* and *God Save the Queen*. Prices ranged from 6d in the gallery to 2s 6d for reserved seats. 'Carriages at half-past ten o'clock'. The *Newcastle Journal* hoped that 'Mr Boutland, whose musical abilities are well-known in this town and neighbourhood, will have crowded audience'.[17]

In January 1858 Princess Victoria married a Prussian prince, but the narrator of Corvan's *Jimmy Munro's Troubles; or, a Hit at the Times*, set to *Bow Wow Wow*, knew that paying Christmas bills and finding the rent were more important.

Excuse me, friends, if troublesome—may aw trouble
ye a while, Sirs,
For troublin' you, for troublin' me, to trouble you to
smile, Sirs;
Ye'll mabies say its double trouble—avoid it nae man
can, Sirs,
We've been born in trouble, bred in trouble since the
world began, Sirs.
Bow wow wow,
The troubles of the times are very bad just now.

Noo, Cursmis time comes once a year, wi' roast beef
lots to feed at,
An' Cursmis bills they trouble then, but some folks
niver heed that;
The landlords trouble you for rent, and smile so when
one pays it,
Other poor souls sigh and say they're troubled hoo to
raise it.
Chorus.

Some married folks that hez nae bairns seem troubled
hoo to get them;
Others in the street to cadge noo varry often set them;
Railway accidents trouble us, directors say they can-
not mend them,
So they varry often trouble us, an' sometimes wor
troubles end then.
Chorus.

Some cheps are troubled noo-a-days hoo to get a wife,
Sirs,
Others get them withoot any, then troubles start for
life, Sirs,
For scoldin' troubles then set in, an' iv chance yor
wife ye mill, Sirs,
They'll pop ye intiv gaol six months, to live in trouble
still, Sirs.
Chorus.

Aw've maw troubles like the rest o' folks, as on through
life aw jog, Sirs;
To tell the truth, aw's troubled sair hoo to reinsuit
my to s, Sirs.
Tailors' bills don't trouble me, but the bobbys they
take note, Sirs,
An' take me on suspicion 'cause there's nae change in
my coat, Sirs.
Chorus.

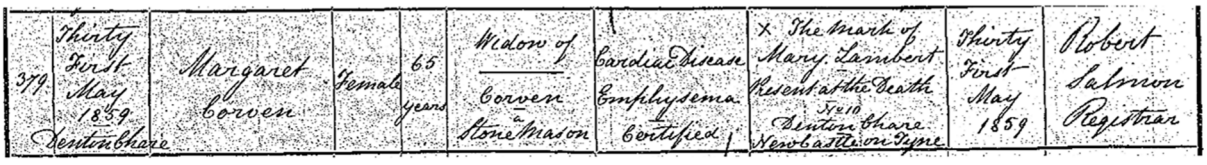
Napoleon hez been troubled since he tuik his cityashun,
Infernal *bums* hez troubled him to cause assassinashun;
Eugenia, tee, she's troubled sair, wiv her husband's
life at at stake, Sirs—
Wor Bobby swears they'll pop him off if he isn't wide
awake, Sirs.
Chorus.

But in spite ov a' the troubles that trouble us poor
devils,
Wor Princess gat wed the tother day, an' noo in wed-
lock revels;
In Prussia wiv her canny man, for life they've settled
doon, Sirs;
My eyes! what royal sport they'd hev beneath the
honey moon, Sirs.
Chorus.

Noo, friends, excuse the troublous rhymes aw've
chane'd to hev a voice in,
Here s may yor troubles ellways end in merry hearts
rejoicing,
And as we toddle on through life banish care with all
all its buddles,
And shout success to coaly Tyne, wiv an end tiv all
wor troubles.
Chorus. [18]

Balmbra engaged Corvan and *The Era* reported that 'the house was crowded to excess' and some of the 'immense favourites' in the company had future engagements in Manchester. In March Corvan's benefit included 'all the available talent in the neighbourhood' and the house was again 'crowded to excess'. Balmbra re-engaged him and 'several new songs' were 'nightly encored'. For *Horse Taming* he got a 'nondescript nag' onto the stage and the audience was so amused that 'a call before the curtain' was 'almost nightly demanded', but the lyrics have not been traced.

The previous December the photographer Hugh Smith had organised a 'grand concert' at the Victoria Rooms in Grey Street and *The Era* reported that it was 'well attended'. In April 1858 the paper noted that the 'elegant suite of rooms' would reopen on Easter Monday with a 'varied entertainment', including two artistes from the Theatre Royal, and it was 'nightly crowded' in May. Mr E.H Hey of the Royal Coloseum in Bradford advertised in *The Era* for 'Parties in all branches of Concert Room business' to open the Royal Olympic Concert Hall in Newcastle. 'N.B. Enclose stamp for reply'. In May he engaged Corvan, who wrote a farce for his benefit. The hall was 'well attended' and the farce went off with 'considerable *eclat*',[19] but the script has not been traced. Late that month Margaret Corven died from heart disease and emphysema, an incurable lung disease often caused by smoking tobacco, at the age of 65.



379	Thirty First May 1859 Denton Chare	Margaret Corven	Female	65 years	Widow of Corven a Stone Mason	Cardiac Disease Emphysema Certified	X The mark of Mary Lambert Present at the Death 9 Denton Chare Newcastle on Tyne	Thirty First May 1859	Robert Salmon Registrar

Early in June 'Margarita Corvin' was given a Catholic burial.

Soon after there was a brilliant comet and Ned Corvan set *The Comet; or, The Skipper's Fright*, to *Polly Parker O*, a tune which was associated with lyrics about a woman who bore another man's child a few weeks after marrying someone else.[20] Corvan's lyrics referred to Sir John Dean Paul, Robson and Bates, the financial swindlers who had left the Thames on a convict ship eight months earlier.[21]

Marrows, aw's pinin' fast away, aw's freetin ivery day,
Aboot this awful danger noo impendin, O!
Aw's shakin a' ti bits, wor aud wife she's tyekin fits,
'Cas the nibors say the world's upon an endin' O!

Says wor preacher tother day, noo a' ye weak sowls pray;
An' ti drop a' worldly care, he did beeseech us, O!
Says he, this mighty orth, wiv all in'ts but little worth—
If a fiery thing a comet chanced ti reach us, O!

'Boot Stronomists, he bawled. then ower the reckinin hawled,
Ti tell how lang a time we had ti bide here, O!
Says he sometime i' June, wiv a tail it will drop doon,
Then a' the world I'mystery suin mun glide here, O!

Thinks aw, begum that's queer, wor preacher he's nee leer,
He's elways on the reet side when he's speakin, O!
So aw'll sell off byeth maw keels, and tyek a ship at Sheels.

For a spot upon the new world aw'll gan seekin' O!

But first aw'l chawk a score ahint the Brown Jug door,
For it's little use o' pasin when life's uncertain, O!
Like Robson, Bates, and Pawl, lads! the kelter in aw'll hawl,
Then for flight like a' the swindlers, aw'll be startin, O!

Noo when aw cum ti think, aw'd better spend maw chink,
Amang my Tyneside cronies, true and hearty, O!
For if we a' mun dee thou knaws as weel as me,
The rich amang the poor mun join the party, O!

Then flow on wor Coaly Tide, spreadin' wealth on ivery side,
Flow on, bright stream, wi' joy ti croon maw giver, O!
Thit he may smile on thee for aw'll eternity,
The light ov peace an harmony for iver, O!

These lyrics evidently did not appear in print for four years.[22]

In July the 48-year-old Tyne sculler Harry Clasper beat the 34-year-old Glaswegian Robert Campbell on the Clyde to win £200 and the Championship of Scotland.[23] By 1 August Corvan and James Spiers were at Balmbra's with the new pianist, Mr Sefton. Corvan sang a new song about Clasper 'dressed in a suit of the veteran's rowing costume' and 'one of the veritable sculls he rowed with in his late match with Campbell', and was 'encored nightly'.[24] The lyrics of *Wor Tyneside Champions* included stage directions and the tune was *Billy Patterson*, a 'blackface' score published by Daniel Emmett in the USA in 1860,[25] but the narrator was a 'keelman' who did not mention that such work had almost completely disappeared.

Aw's a crack amang the nobs oot on the spree,
O! Bobby Pattison.
Aw ken a thing or two, that ye may see,
Noo aw tell ye se.
Aw's proud ti think that Tyneside lick the sawcy South,
O! Bobby Pattison.
Wor Champions hez won laurels, that proves aw speak the truth,
Noo aw tell ye, noo aw tell ye.
On Tyneside aw was bred. is true as maw nyem's Ned:
Aw's Champion on the kee, for nyen can wallop me.

CHORUS.

An aw'l lay maw money doon, wi reet good heart and will,
Ti back the sons o' coally Tyne, huzza, for Tyneside still!

Air---"Billy Nuts."

The Cockneys say uz keelmen cheps hez nowther sense nor larnin',
An chaff aboot wor tawk, the fails, but faix they've got a warnin';
They thowt wor brains wis mixed wi coals, but noo a change that odd is,
Alang wi coals we send up men that licks the Cockney bodies.
Brave Harry Clasper aw'l nyem first amang wor stars that shine, man,
Lads! here's the stroke that famis myed wor canny coally Tyne, man.
(Imitate Harry Clasper in position.) Chorus as above.

May Chambers lang his laurels keep, wor champion o' the world, man,
His bonny rowin adds fresh fame whene'er his flag's unfurled, man;
Of Runners, tee, we've got the tips, Tyne bangs the world for pacin';
Gox! White and Rowan, champion peds, bangs a' the lot for racin'.
When little White means runnin, lads, he's shaped in fine condishin',
He dodged ti get the start like this, see graceful in position.
(Imitate the start.) Chorus as above.

Air---"Chant."

When pay-week comes, wor Collier lads for the toon they a' repair:
Then ower the Moor, an' roond the coorse, ye'll fynd them boolin' there;
Hail, rain, or blaw, 'mang sleet or snaw, ye'll fynd wor boolin' men,
Watchin' the trig, aw moves the twig, howe! let's hev her here agyen.

SAINT, wor famis champion, with his bold eye keen and clear,
Like leetnin' sends oot mighty thraws, the best o' men scarce near;
Hollo! "Pies all hot" upon the spot, they're suin put oot o'seet;
"Some mair gravy," cries oot yen; "aw say, mistor, d'ye mean to say that's meat?
It's mair like deed pussey-cat—war the bool there—less gob!
Six ti fower on Broon—hie, men! six ti fower on Broon aggen the Snob.
War the bool there, war the bool there, Harry Wardle's myed a throw;"
An when he hoyed his bool away he stood just so—
(Imitate position.) Chorus as above.

Air---"Bob an Joan."

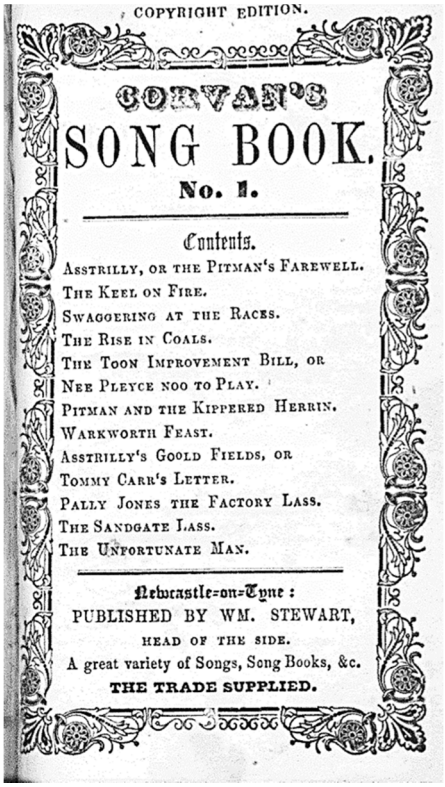
Wor champion Quoit players here thor match ye'll seldom meet with.
For ony length ye like, ye'll fynd men ti compete with;
For quoits we've famis been since Julius Seazor landed.
Man! for generations doon, the gam's been duly handed.
McGregor plays weel, Lambert weel can fling her.
But Harle shapes just like this when puttin on a ringer.
(Position.)

CHORUS.

An aw'l lay maw money doon, wi reet good heart and will,
To back the sons o' coally Tyne, huzza, for Tyneside still!

These lyrics were not published for four years.[26]

Around this time William Reay Walker printed three numbers of a 'COPYRIGHT EDITION' of *Corvan's Song Book*.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CORVAN'S

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No. 1.

Contents.

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SWAGGERING AT THE RACES.
THE RISE IN COALS.
THE TOON IMPROVEMENT BILL, OR NEE PLEYCE NOO TO PLAY.
PITMAN AND THE KIPPERED HERRIN.
WARKWORTH FEAST.
ASSTRILLY'S GOOLD FIELDS, OR TOMMY CARR'S LETTER.
PALLY JONES THE FACTORY LASS.
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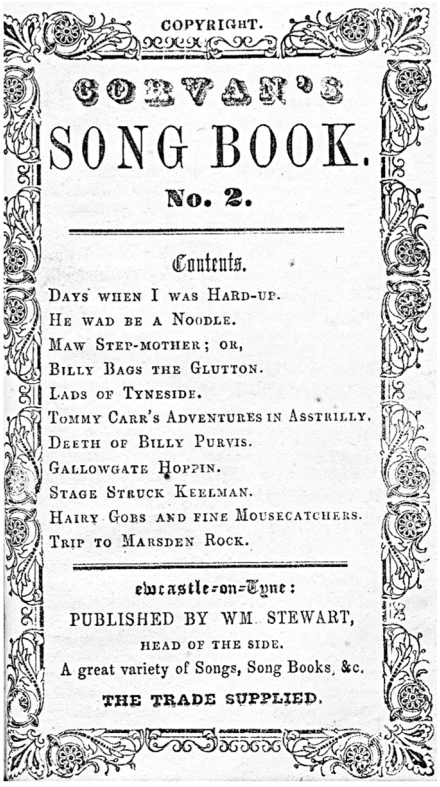
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No. 2.

Contents.

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HE WAD BE A NOODLE.
MAW STEP-MOTHER; OR,
BILLY BAGS THE GLUTTON.
LADS OF TYNESIDE.
TOMMY CARR'S ADVENTURES IN ASSTRILLY.
DEETH OF BILLY PURVIS.
GALLOWGATE HOPPIN.
STAGE STRUCK KEELMAN.
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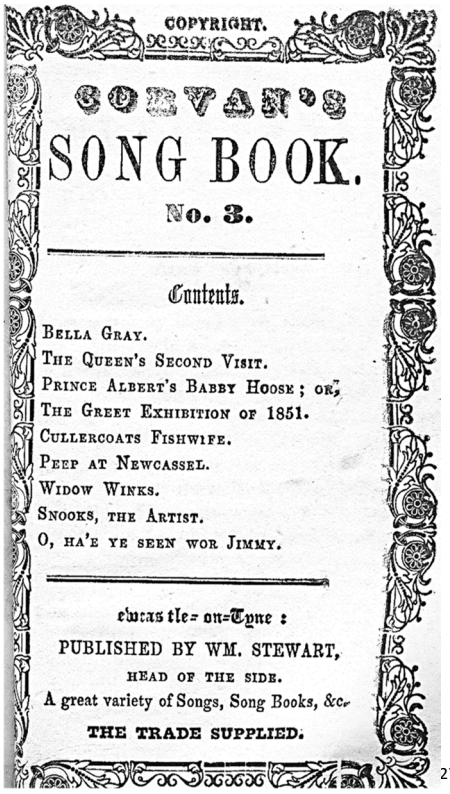
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CORVAN'S

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No. 3.

Contents.

BELLA GRAY.
THE QUEEN'S SECOND VISIT.
PRINCE ALBERT'S BABBY HOOSE; OR,
THE GREET EXHIBITION OF 1851.
CULLERCOATS FISHWIFE.
PEEP AT NEWCASSEL.
WIDOW WINKS.
SNOOKS, THE ARTIST.
O, HA'E YE SEEN WOR JIMMY.

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27

The songs in the first two numbers were in the same order as the previous edition, but they were differently ordered in the third. Many were far from new and some were seven years old.

Years earlier Harry Clasper had invited Robert Chambers, a puddler at a Gateshead ironworks, to join his four-man crew, and in April 1859 28-year-old Chambers beat Thomas White of London on the Tyne for stakes of £100 a side.[28] Corvan set *Chambers and White* to a tune by Friedrich Kücken that was associated with *Trab, Trab, Trab*,[29] and an old favourite melody.

The Tyne wi fame iz ringin' on heros old an young,
Fresh lawrels daily bringin', but noo awl men hez sung
In praise o' Chambers, ov Tyneside men, the pride,
Who defeated White ov London for one hunred pund aside.

CHORUS.

Singin' pull away, pull away, pull away. boys!
Pull away, boys, se cliver,
Pull away, pull away, pull away, boys,
Chambers for iver!

They're off, they're off, the cry is, then cheers suin rend the air,
Like leetnin they pass by us, the game an plucky pair;
Greek meets Greek then faster, an faster goes the pace,
Gan on, Chambers! gan on, White! may the best man win the race.

CHORUS.

Stroke for stroke contendin', they sweep on wi the tide,
Fortune seems impendin' the victor ti decide:
At last the Cockney loosin' strength, the fowlin gam did steal,
He leaves his wettar ivery length, an runs Chambers iv a Keel.

SPOKEN.—What a hulla baloo! Hoo the Cockney speeled away, ivery yen thowt the race was ower. Some said it was a deed robbery, others a worry. an wawk heym before the finish o' the race. There was a chep stannin' aside me wiv his hands iv his pockets—aw'm sartin there wis nowt else in—luikin' on the river wiv a feyce like a fiddle-stick. He sung the followin' lament, efter the style ov "There's nae Luck."

Air—"Nae Luck aboot the Hoose."

Says one poor soul aw've selled my pigs, my clock, my drawers, an bed,
An doon to Wawkor a' mun wawk, when aw might a rode i'stead:

Gox! there's wor Jim an a' the crew's pawned ivery stitch o' claes,
An they say thor's two chops selled their wives, the six ti fower to raise,

CHORUS.

For oh! dismay upon that day in ornist did begin,
On ivry face a chep might trace—(Spoken)—Who's forst Bob?—

(Sings)—Oh! the Cockney's sure to win.

Ten lengths aheed—fareweel bedsteed—maw achin beyn nae mair
On thou mun rowl, no! this poor soul mun rest on deep despair;
Wor Nannie, tee, she'll curse on flee, and belt me like a Tork,
For aw've lost my money, time, an spree, and mebie loss maw work.

CHORUS.

SPOKEN,—Comin' doon efter awl wis ower, aw meets one i' wor chops, (an Irishman) they cawld him Patrick, but a' can'd him Mick, for shortness. He waden't wait for the finish, altho' he backed Bob. So ah hailed him. "Hie Mick, We's forst?"—"Go to blazes!" says he.—"Nonsense, Mick, who's forst?"—"Och! shure," says he, "the Londin man wos forst half way before the race wis quarther over."—"Had on, Mick, that's a Bull; did ye lay owt on tiv him, aw mean Bob."—"By my sowl, I did! an' I'd like to lay this lump ov a stick on his dhirty coco-nut.—The next time I speckulate on floatin' praporty may I be sthruck wid a button on my upper lip as big a clock face."—"But Chambers iz forst," say aw.—"Arrah! d'ye mane to say that?" says he.—"Didn't aw tell ye he'd win afore iver he started."—Hurro!—More power!—Fire away!

CHORUS.—Pull away, &c.

These lyrics were evidently not published for three years,[30] but Corvan kept on writing about public events.

Emperor Louis Napoleon hoped to convince Queen Victoria that his Cherbourg naval base was no threat to Britain. For *The Queen's Visit to Cherburg* Corvan used the tunes of *Sly Old Fox*, which was associated with Charles Dibdin's 60-year-old lyrics based on Aesop's fable,[31] and *The Spider and the Fly*, which also suggested deviousness.[32] *Far, far upon the Sea* was about marital deception,[33] as was *Jonathan Brown*,[34] while James Sandford had composed *Lucy Neal* for the Congo Melodists, and its lyrics were about a male slave's frustrated love for a 'yellow' slave woman.[35]

Air---"Sly Old Fox."

Now Louis Napoleon, bye the bye,
Tol lol, &c.
With great success a game did try,
Tol lol, &c.
Our gracious Queen, admired by all,
Forgot herself, and deigned to call,
With an august assembly, got up for a stall.
Ri tol de dol lol, &c.
No other crowned heads did he invite,
Tol lol, &c.
His game being to gammon John Bull at the sight.
Tol lol, &c.

For ages past Kings, one by one,
And Emperors toiled, being bent upon
Showing up Britain as well as Vauban.
Tol lol de dol lol, &c.

Air---"Spider and the Fly."

Will you come into my Cherbourg, sly Louis he did say,
That is, he telegraphed, or else, sent word some other way:
Mind bring Field Marshall Albert, we'll receive all with *eclat*,
Your Majesty and Ministers, so Victoria *bonswa*,
Will you, will you, will you, will you, come in, British Queen.

Air---"Far, Far upon the Sea"

All arrangements being made for this regal masquerade,
O'er the bright blue waters nobly on they go,
With our noble channel fleet, well manned, and fit to meet
A friend upon the ocean, or a foe.
'Twas thus they left our shores, where a British lion roars,
Far, far above the thunder of the seas,
Where Neptune's briny throng, in triumph bears along,
Old England's flag, that ever braves the battle and the breeze.
[Repeat first four lines.]

Air---"Jonathan Brown."

Now a very true story I'm going to tell,
Well founded on facts, and you all know it well;
While the Queen and Prince Albert sailed along in their yacht,
Albert says, 'Vat's his game, *Vic*, vat can he be at ?"
With his dumble dum deary, &c.

Don't speak so loud, dear *Al*, if you please,
For Mollykoff's trying to cop every weeze;
Now the guns commence firing, they landed, and then
Napoleon seized *Vicey*, saying, "Veleome, mine frien."
With his dumble, &c.

Dere's my maritime wonder, in their ears he did bawl,
And dis is my naval new arsenal;
Then he showed them all round this monstrous plan,
And about our defences to talk he began.
With his dumble, &c.

You very mush back in England, said he,
But we ne'er turned our backs yet, said Vicey, with glee:
Dis is very large gun, Mrs. Albert, you see,
Yes! but I've *larger* in Woolwich, so it's no treet to me
With your dumble, &c.

With my fleet in my harbour I'm unequalled no doubt
And should war be proclaim'd I could soon fit them out.
Ho, ho! that's your game, then the white of his eye,
Turned round as the Queen said *you'd better not try*,
With your dumble, &c.

My friends were not pleased with your queer British laws,
And I, to, thought Barnard all but in my claws;
Chop de heads off such men, says the Queen, *ah mon dieu*,
If we harbour assassins, we once harbourd you,
With your dumble, &c.

Then let us be friends, Vic, for when once unfurled,
Our flags, still united, can conquer the world:
I adore Albion's Isle, may ill ne'er beset it,
Says Vic, *so did your Uncle*, he tried hard for to get it.
With his dumble, &c.

May our Queen take a hint from this Emperor's boast,
And strengthen old England, as needs round the coast,
For if we wish to have peace, I dare venture to say,
Be ready for war, lads, that's the true and best way.

Air---"Lucy Neal."

Ye loyal hearts, in Britain's isle, who ever true have been,
To honour's cause and England's laws now shout God save the Queen:
And may her Majesty and those connected with the state,
Look a little more at home, before it is too late.

Prepare our wooden walls---prepare our wooden walls,
We must complete our Channel Fleet, 'tis threat'ning danger calls.

Britannia, rouse thy slumbering lion, and let all nations know,
We are prepared for peace or war, to meet a friend or foe:
Let no vile hypocrite assume that Britons dread to meet
Napoleon or his Cherbourg forts, while floats our Channel Fleet.

Spoken---And while we enjoy peace and good-will with our neighbours on the opposite side of the Channel, let us at the same time, with manly hearts and feelings of patriotic zeel, sing---

"Rule Britannia."---*Finale.*

Corvan parodied the Sardinian Napoleon's English, the German Albert's French and Victoria's 'cockney'. The familiar use of 'Vic' and 'Al' for the royal couple, and 'Mollykoff' for the French ambassador, the Duc de Malakoff, undermined the seriousness of the invitation to sing the 'national' anthem. These lyrics were evidently not printed for three years,[36] but Corvan advertised manuscript copies for sale in the *Newcastle Courant*. The seven postage stamps were probably required to write for engagements and he gave his postal address as the Wheat Sheaf.

"THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO CHERBOURG."
A NEW COMIC SONG, written by Mr. EDWARD CORVAN, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and sung nightly with unbounded applause by Mr. J. H. Spiers, at Mr. J. Balmbra's Music Hall, may be had post free on the receipt of seven stamps.
Address, Mr. E. Corvan, Balmbra Music Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. [37]

Days later three-year-old Isabella Corvan junior was baptised in St. Mary's Catholic Church in Newcastle. Her father advertised *The Queen's Visit* in *The Era*, and the paper was mildly impressed by its reception at Balmbra's. In September Corvan and Spiers were 'as amusing and entertaining as ever' and took part in 'the very humorous ballet' of *The Tailor and Shoemaker*. The house

was 'crowded to suffocation' for Corvan's benefit and Spiers' rendition of *The Queen's Visit* was 'received with roars of laughter and applause'. Two new Corvan songs were 'deservedly encored', but their titles and lyrics have not been traced.

In October Mr Summers wanted 'a Good Comic Singer, Two Good Niggers, and a Violinist; and all novelties suitable for a Concert Hall' for the People's Concert Hall in the Arcade Rooms in Sunderland. In November, when Corvan and Spiers' engagement ended, Balmbra engaged Mr James Plant, the 'Nigger, and Comic Singer and dancer, Banjo, Bone and Concertina player, and the best Tambourine performer in the world'. The famous Christy Minstrels appeared at the New Town Hall, and Balmbra engaged the Alabama Minstrels, but Mr J. Ward, the proprietor of the Old Theatre Music Hall in Drury Lane, Sunderland, engaged 'E. Corvan, Comic'. In Newcastle Balmbra competed with the 'tolerably well attended' Victoria Rooms and Bell's Hippodrome Circus by engaging 'Nigger melodists' who drew 'good houses',[38] but music-making was not confined to the town's concert halls.

Edward Glynn was born into an iron founder's family living near the Ouseburn, just west of Newcastle. He later attended Dr Bruce's academy in Percy Street, then became an apprenticed of John Clayton, the Town Clerk. In 1839 Glynn became an attorney in Hexham, but returned to Newcastle in 1845, and from May 1858 he edited the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.[39] Soon after he visited 'Pandemonium' (Pandon) and reported that no invader since the Romans had 'brought more misery' than the 'starving Celt' and their 'allies – poverty, ignorance, disease, and crime'. There were fights between Ulster Protestant Ribbon Lodges and southern Irish Catholics, especially in 'Brandenburgh Stairs' (Coburg Stairs), whose residents were mostly from Connaught and spoke Gaelic. Late one night Glynn and a 'country parson' were 'guided by the sound of a fiddle to a low, narrow street, running parallel with the shore', called 'Strand Lane' (Sandgate), where 'every third house was a tavern'.

> We looked in upon first one, and then another of these parties, generally composed half of men and half of women, seated round a table, at which an old man or a blind man … drew forth from an old fiddle, with all the strength of his elbow, the strains of some jig, strathspey, or reel. No dancing was going on upon the sanded stone floors, and the impression was of melancholy rather than fun. These were all indigenous guests. It is only when the sailors come on shore with pockets full of money … that the 'double shuffle' and 'heel and toe' resound on the well-worn pavements.

The men had a 'Kitty crop', like prisoners, and 'may have been respectable mechanics', but 'looked like thieves'. The women were 'stout, strong, brazen-faced creatures' and most 'looked able to thrash any of the partners with whom they consorted'. One had been 'copped' (arrested) 66 times and served 20 prison sentences. The attorney and parson declined to take any refreshment and left, only to find 'More public houses, more 'Kitty crops', more brazen faces, more beer, more fiddles, more tobacco smoke' along the street and one blind young fiddler who made a 'precarious living'. A boy singer, born in Calton Goal, Edinburgh, where his mother was serving a two-year sentence, had had a good schooling at Leith Poor House, but his mother and father, a hawker, took him through Northumberland and Durham to Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and then Lincolnshire. The boy got the name of 'Dundee' from singing *Bonnie Dundee*, which he did 'with a good voice and good taste'. He could made 6s a day, and up to 9s in Glasgow on a Saturday, and once, when he 'got a good "pitch"', he made 8½d in ten minutes, but the police arrested him and his parents took his money for drink. When his mother knocked down a policeman in Yorkshire and got two months in Northallerton jail, father and son went to Newcastle, but 'Dundee' refused to sing.[40]

By 1859 Billy Thompson was landlord of the Iron Ship Launch in South Shields.[41] Corvan had no engagements at large venues, but an advertisement for a concert appeared in the *Shields Daily Gazette* in February. 'CENTRAL HALL, Chapter Row. Go to night and see Corven'. Days later another advertisement appeared with the spelling of the singer's surname corrected.

MR J. WARD will give Two Grand Concerts at the NORTHUMBERLAND ARMS, N.S., on Tuesday & Wednesday, Feb. 15 & 16. Go and and hear Ned Corvan. [42]

Then he went south. The back room of the Ship Inn in Middlesbrough had been a concert hall for at least a year.[43] Its proprietress had died, but Mr T.R. Ratcliffe had reopened it, and *The Era* noted the event condescendingly, even though 'Mr. Ned Corvan (the comic characteristic singer)' was a member of the company.[44]

In Newcastle the ground floor of 'Racket Court Buildings' had a 'good cart entrance from St Martin's Court' and was available for rent,[45] and a Mr Dixon opened a 'depot' for 'all kinds of agricultural implements, both for exhibition or sale'.[46] The singer Thomas Boutland was 'much reduced in circumstances', and there was a benefit in Nelson Street Lecture Room. The attendance was 'all that could be desired' and a 'considerable surplus' was to be 'handed over to the distressed family', but Boutland died in March.[47]

Two years earlier the prime minister had given J.P. Robson the '(poet), of Sunderland' £20 in recognition of his 'contributions to literature',[48] and by 1859 Robson and his wife lived in Sussex Street with the family of H. Lowthian, a tailor, and Robson called himself a 'Poet' in the local directory.[49] In March he wrote *Pitmin's Advice tiv his Marras* and later recalled that Corvan 'may have let his audiences believe that he wrote it'.[50] In April 'the popular local song writer' was 'clowning' at Swallow's Hippodrome Circus in Newcastle, but would appear at Balmbra's shortly,[51] and an enigmatic advertisement 'To Correspondents' appeared in *the Newcastle Daily Chronicle*. '"Edward Corvan." "Hugo Vamps" – Received. The letter of Mrs Harris on "The Diseased Meat Case" is unavoidably crowded out by other matters'.

Corvan also wrote to the *Chronicle*.

SIR,—In this age of wonderful inventions, monuments to men of genius, &c., I am at a loss to know how the "Folks of Canny Newcassel" can have forgotten our once universally respected Tyneside friend and jester, Billy Purvis. He died in Old Hartlepool, December 16th, 1853, and his remains are interred in St. Hilda's churchyard of that town. Nothing marks the last resting place of "Canny awd Billy" save the green mound of the pauper. Surely then, some of our genuine townsmen will interest themselves in paying this last tribute of respect to the departed Yorick of their youthful days. That bundle wor pastime, he stole for the last time, when deeth corked him off to the land o' the leal. I am confident were a committee formed and a trustworthy treasurer appointed, subscriptions would be forwarded from every town and village in the two counties, to erect a suitable headstone. By inserting this, and giving your opinion on the subject, you will confer a favour on his friends, and your very humble servant. EDWARD CORVAN.
Balmbra's Music Hall, Cloth Market. [52]

Soon after Corvan advertised his manuscript lyrics for 250 percent more than previously.

ORIGINAL COMIC MEDLEY, "THE TALKING FISH," by EDWARD CORVAN, author of the "Queen's Visit to Cherbourg." Manuscript copy, post free, eighteen stamps. Address, E. CORVAN, Balmbra's Music Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The Talking Fish has not been traced, but the *Newcastle Courant* noted that 'the local singer and song writer' was 'well received'.[53] By May 'the everlasting Ned Corvan' was an 'immense favourite' at a 'well attended' Balmbra's, and his new songs included *Armstrong's Gun* and a sketch, *The Knight of the Silver Whistle; or, the Rivals of Dr. Mark and his Little Men*. (Neither has been found.) *The Era* reported on 'the local favourite, whose exertions with the company form an agreeable evening's entertainment', and in June John Sessford 'presided' at the piano when Corvan played in a 'Densely Crowded' benefit.

In July Mrs Ward wanted 'a Gentleman well acquainted with the Nigger business' to 'lead a party of female serenaders' at the Old Theatre Music Hall in Sunderland, and would prefer 'one that could play the concertina or accordion'. 'Also two female vocalists for the above line of business, to sing solos as well'. Weeks later the hall was 'nightly crowded for a 'Female Coloured Opera *Troupe*' that included Kate Martin in 'blackface'.[54]

Early in August Corvan had a one-off engagement in Swalwell.

THE ANNUAL SOIREE of the SWALWELL and DERWENTHAUGH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE will be held on Monday, August 1st, 1859, in the splendid and spacious Marquees, belonging to the Institute, erected within Axwell Park.
Mr EDWARD CORVAN will sing a few of his choice Songs on this occasion.
TEA on the tables at 4 o'clock; BALL to commence at 8 o'clock. Tickets to the Tea, 1s. each. Tickets to the Ball, Gentlemen, 1s.; Ladies, 6d. each.
Trains leave Newcastle for Scotswood at 4·15 and 7 o'clock P.M.; Scotswood for Newcastle at 9·20 P.M. [55]

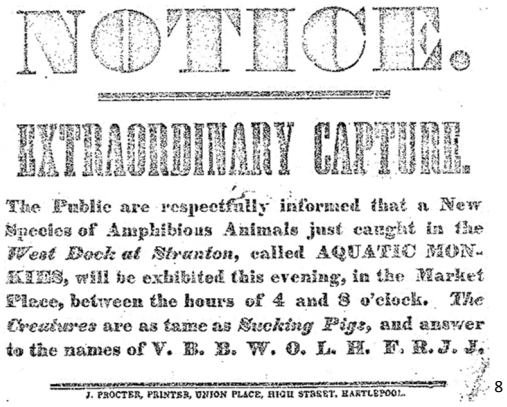
The *Newcastle Guardian* reported that the event went with 'considerable éclat' and included 'music, both vocal and instrumental —the former being furnished by the celebrated comic singer "Ned Corvan"',[56] who was engaged to appear at Barrington Brass Band's Grand Gala at Willow Bridge Farm, a short walk from Choppington Station.

A BALL will be held in the evening, to commence at 8 o'clock; and arrangements are being made with that celebrated Comic Northumbrian, NED CORVAN, to amuse the company at intervals during the evening. That noted Flutist, Mr. MACDOUGAL, from Newcastle, is also engaged to give a series of SOLOS upon the Flute.
Admission Gentlemen 1s, Ladies 6d. [57]

Corvan had been a full-time professional singer-songwriter for five and a half years, and while he probably got some one-off engagements, the absence of notices and reviews in the newspapers suggests that he had no bookings at the major venues.

11. *Who Hung the Monkey?*

During the Napoleonic Wars some Hartlepool men and women had reportedly encountered a monkey on the shore, mistaken him for a French spy and threatened to castrate him, but hanged him instead.[1] In Newcastle, the house-painter William Armstrong wrote *The Baboon*,[2] in which 'pitmen' mistook a monkey for a 'hairy French spy'. It was not published until 1827,[3] but so was the Gateshead printer William Stephenson's *The Sandhill Monkey*, in which a 'keel skipper' mistook a monkey for a shopkeeper's grandfather.[4] In 1828 the Royal Minor Theatre in Manchester staged the melodrama *Jack Robinson and His Monkey*, 'Mushapug'.[5] Charles Pelham Thompson's script was printed by 1829 and it was staged around the country in the 1830s. *The Hartlepool Fishermen's Electioneering Song for 1841* complained about Frenchmen fishing near the town and supported Liberal parliamentary candidates. In 1842 William and Thomas Fordyce's *Newcastle Song Book* included *The Baboon* and *The Sandhill Monkey*,[6] and in 1844 the Hartlepool printer John Procter printed which claimed that fishermen had taken bribes to support a new dock at nearby Stranton,[7] and he probably he printed another leaflet about 'AQUATIC MONKIES'.



NOTICE.

EXTRAORDINARY CAPTURE.

The Public are respectfully informed that a New Species of Amphibious Animals just caught in the *West Dock at Stranton*, called AQUATIC MONKIES, will be exhibited this evening, in the Market Place, between the hours of 4 and 8 o'clock. *The Creatures* are as tame as *Sucking Pigs*, and answer to the names of V. B. B. W. O. L. H. F. R. J. J.

J. PROCTER, PRINTER, UNION PLACE, HIGH STREET, HARTLEPOOL.

8

By 1850 around 5,000 ships loaded at Hartlepool each year, and over 3,500 at nearby Stranton, but in 1851 almost as many foreign vessels used Stranton as Hartlepool, which shipped over 1,560,000 tons of coal.[9] Hartlepool's population was 9,500, but and Stranton's 4,700, and it became known as West Hartlepool, while Old Hartlepool was called East Hartlepool.

John Procter's sons, John Kirtley and Thomas Mowbray, attended Gainford Academy, a boarding school near Darlington,[10] and 'Jack' would have left by 1859. By then East Hartlepool's population was almost 12,000, but West Hartlepool's was close to 14,000, and John Wilson Carmichael painted the scene from above West Hartlepool with East Hartlepool in the distance.

11

Mr J.W. Hastie, the proprietor of the New Concert Hall in the Dock Hotel, East Hartlepool, advertised for female artistes, and the 'Saloons, Music Halls, &c' section of *The Era* reported that the 'large and commodious hall' was 'crowded nightly' for a company including 'Mr. E. Corvan'. By December William Nelson owned the hall and Mr W. Hastie led the band, but 'Mr Edward Corvan, Tyneside comedian', was a member of the 'talented company of vocal and instrumental performers' and business was good.[12] John Procter was very ill and his son Jack was probably in charge of the press in Southgate Street, East Hartlepool,[13] where someone printed a song on old paper but without a printer's name, though only a poor photocopy has been traced.

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

"Air.—The Tinker's Wedding."

Written and Sung by Mr E. Corvan, with immense applause at the Dock Hotel Music Hall, Southgate, Hartlepool.

In former times when war and strife,
From o'er the channel threatened life,
When all was ready to the knife,
To watch the Frenchmen, funky, O!
Chorus—*Doorgit, dooram, dooram, da,* &c.

The fishermen with courage high
Seized what they thought a real French spy;
Kill him says *yan*, up with him to die,
They did, and they hung the Monkey, O!

They tried every way to make him speak,
They tortured *Pug* till he loud did squeak,—
That's French says one, says another it's Greek,
The Fishermen then got drunky, O!

He has hair all over the wives did cry,
Oh, what an a woman with him would lie;
With fish-guts then they bung'd up his eye,
Before they hung the Monkey, O!

Now some the Monkey did bewail,
For although Dumb he had a *tale* (tail),
He'd sooner 'praps have gone to jail,
For *Pug* was turning funky, O!

The Monkey made some curious mugs,
When they shaved his head and clipped his lugs,
Saying this is the way to serve humbugs,
Before they hung the Monkey, O!

Hammer his ribs the thundering thief,
Pummel his peyte 'weel man wi' your neef,
He's landed here for nought but grief,—
He's Old Napoleon's uncky, O!

To poor *Pug* thus all hands behaved,
Out of his jimmy some fools raved,
Another cries out he never been shaved,
Before they hung the Monkey, Oh!

Then they put him on a grid-iron hot,
The Monkey then quite lively got,
He grinn'd his teeth at all the lot,
And roll'd his eyes quite spunky, O!

Then a fisherman up to poor *Pug* goes,
Saying let's hang him at once to end his woes,
The Monkey flew at him and bit of his nose,
Then they off to the Moor with the Monkey, O!

But let us hope that on the Sea
We'll still maintain our Sovereignty,
May France and England long agree,
And never grench other gol funky, O!

As regards poor *Pug*, I've had my say,
And former times have passed away,
Still you may hear to this very day
Boys crying, why hung the Monkey, O!

The audience may have been offended, but while there is no evidence to support the legend that they ran Corvan out of town, he was in London by late December. John Wilton's Music Hall and supper Rooms in Wellclose-Square, Leman street, Whitechapel, advertised the first appearance of 'Ned Corvan, "Tyne-side Poet" and comic vocalist', but he was not on the bill by New Year, or on that of the Dock Hotel Music Hall in Hartlepool, where Nelson claimed to be 'doing good business', but was willing to lease it to 'any respectable party on liberal terms'. Blackface performers were still in demand, and Mrs Ward was forming a 'Female Coloured Opera Troupe' for the Royal Arcade Rooms in Sunderland.[15] John Sessford had recently sung at the Educational Society prize-giving at Bebside in Northumberland,[16] and by February John Balmbra, the 'spirited proprietor of the Music Saloon in Newcastle', had leased Berry Edge Theatre Royal near Consett steelworks, and 'Mr John Sessford (pianist and vocalist)' and other Wheat Sheaf performers ran concerts there twice a week,[17] but Newcastle drew the main attractions.

Tom Sayers, the former world champion bare-knuckle fighter, had recently taken part in a controversial drawn match with John Heenan from the USA,[18] and in June Sayers showed his trophies at Newcastle Races.[19] Corvan reused the tune of *Hokey Pokey* for *Tom Sayers*, and while his narrator acknowledged he was no pugilist, he was familiar with other forms of combat.

'Boot deeds heroic noo-a-days, we tune wor harps an' sing in praise,
An' like true Britons ever raise,
Three cheers for England's glory ;
'Boot heroes greet by flood or field, who shed their blood but niver yield,
Who Albion's might wiv courage wield, to raise aloft Britannia's shield ;
Brave men, hooiver placed, still mense our native land, whose true defence
Is men of pluck an' men of sense,
To raise high England's glory.

Then welcome to wor canny toon ; thrice welcome Sayers of true renoon ;
May victory ever be the boon
Of gallant deeds in story.
Welcome England's fistic pride amang us coalys on Tyne-side,
May fortune croon whate'er betide your fame as champion far and wide.
Then here's to Sayers, come, fill each glass, may his colours niver come to grass,
May his career wiv honour pass,
An' add to fistic glory.

He's not ower small, nor yet ower big, but big eneuff the moves to twig,
His auctioneer when meant to dig,
Sets aw thor snoots a running.
An' weel they say their hides he warms, that joins wi' him in war's alarms,
He nawps thor scawps, an' spoils their charms, that ventors in the bricklayer's arms,
He slashed the Slasher for the belt, Aaron Jones an' Grant did welt, an' Benjamin wiv one good pelt,
He cuik'd his goose near Lunnin.

Some officers aw heard cheps say, to the barracks got brave Tom one day,
His fistic science to display
In deeds of arms delightin',
One big'un pummel'd Tom severe, his motive being brave Tom to queer,
But says Tom to Mallet, just look here, I'll let him see the auctioneer,
Like leetning then oot went the reet, and sent big mars clean of his feet,
With a caution hoo such nobs should treat
The cheps that's up to fighting.
Aw niver was a fighting man, tho' aw'll run as far as ony can,
Begox its always been maw plan
To flee from ought alarming.
Aw've read O'Figg, Tom Crib, an' Spring, aboot Jim Ward aw've heard folks sing,
An' Bendy wiv his bendy swing, but Sayers, thow's maw pet in the ring,

Nae blackguard tricks wi' him thou'll see, nor bullying ways, but kind an' free,
Just what a hero ought to be,
That gives and takes a warmin'.
A fightin' man aw'll not despise, for all sorts fight as on time flies,
Gox, each man fights until he dies,
Then deeth is sure victorious ;
When squallin' yeps, upon the lap, we fight wi' mammy for mair pap,
We fight at schuill, O sad mishap, an' then we feel the cane or strap,
We fight wiv cupid, battles pitched, at last by cupid fairly switched,
We fight on still, wi' wives bewitched,
Who flash the ring before us.
Then may I hope my kind friends here, on my fistic sang won't be severe,
For its very seldom aw appear,
Wi' milling deeds in story.
But bear in mind, this is maw aim, to praise the form of ought that's game,
May Britons never blush wi' shame, for wor P.R. once high in fame,
Long life to Sayers, Corinthians shout, courage, Tom, to fight it out,
If cracking croons make croons, nae doot
Ye'll get yor share o' glory. 20

In July *The Era* included a belated and plagiarised short notice about the death of 'the once late famous Billy Purvis' which patronised him as 'a man of rough manners and broad humour', but conceded that 'many acts testify to his having a generous heart'. 'Mr Edward Corvan, the local singer', was then at the Circus Royal in Newcastle,[21] but his next engagement seems to have been in September when he was back in Bedlington for the Barrington Band's Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert in the New School Room. He introduced 'comic specimens of literature and the fine arts' in 'The Keelman as painter, poet and musician', sang *The Collier's Advice*, which he had 'written expressly for this occasion', and a 'comic' song about 'scenes in Newcastle Soup Kitchen last Winter', and he played an 'Imitation of Scottish Bagpipes, &c'.[22] The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reported that he 'created roars of laughter and applause', so that 'many had sore sides with laughing' at his 'drollery',[23] but only one of the songs has been found.

Newcastle Soup Kitchen was near the Goal and not far from where Corvan was raised, but it opened only when the weather was severe and unemployment rose.[24] Corvan reused the tune of *Lillie's a Lady*, plus *The Merry Haymakers*, which dated to the early 18th century,[25] and *The March of the Cameron Men*, which had military associations.[26] *The Soup Kitchen* focussed on Sandgate and Quayside men, but also on the Irish 'paddies' and Scottish 'Sandys' who used it, and it included a good deal of patter.

The soup kitchen's open, then cheer, Christians, cheer;
What glorious news for poor starvin' souls here!
The soup kitchen's open for all sorts in need,
To rush in wi' yor tickets, ye'll get a good feed.

CHORUS.

O fine het steem soup! O bless that steem soup!
Aw likes my drop o' soup!

It's myed oot o' beef hoffs, fine barley an' peas;
Smokin' het its delicious to sup at yen's ease;
Its good for the rich, an' not bad for the poor;
Gox! empty kite grumlers its sartin to cure.

SPOKEN.—Drop that spoon, spooney. D'ye want te myek maw spoon the bone o' contenshun, eh? Bring this chep a laidle, mistruss, an' a basin. Next the bottom be wants some thick. What a weight that soup's taen frae maw mind. Begox! its run intiv the channels o' the corporation, an' noo aw feel like an alderman efter a good feed. It's a fine institution; it suits maw constitution; an' tiv any poor soul in a state o' destitution its a charitab'e contribution. Some people's born wi' silver spoons i' their gobs, but it strikes me mine's been a basin o' soup. They enjoy the luxeries o' this world, I—wey niver mind—just gie me the sweet sounds o' spoons an' basins, that's the music that bids me discourse; it fills wi' delight, thor's nought can lick't.

AIR—"Merry Haymakers."

Then a song an a cheer for the rich spreed iv steem
Of the soup floatin' roond us on high,
For the givers an' the makers, the tickets an' the Quakers,
An' subscribers that niver tips shy.

We blaw oot wor bags on the cheap ivery day,
While happy as kings there we mess;
Gox! us poor starved souls niver heed the wind that howls,
For close
round the tables we press.
Then a song and a cheer, etc.

AIR—"Cameron Men."

Round tables and benches, the bully's they stick
All clad in thor feedin' array,
Some coolin' het soup, others fishin' for thick,
Others waitin' thor turns in dismay;
Then we hear the spoons rattlin', ratt'in', rattlin',
We hear them agyen and agyen,
Thor knockin' thor basins and brattlin'
'Tis the voice of the brave Sandgate Men.

Bob Johnson cries how! becrike men what's that
Wiv' his spoon raised up high for to view,
Begum its a rat, or a greet lump o' fat,
Says Ranter its mabies some stew;
Then we hear the spoons rattlin', rattlin', rattlin',
Ye hear them agyen and agyen,
Shove the salt round, aw hear some cheps prattlin'
'Tis the voice o' the brave Keeside men.

The paddies flock'd in wi' the rest iv a trice,
Then doon to thor basins they stoop,
Says Mick its cock-turtle, says Barney its nice,
Made from real Irish bulls. O what soup!
Then ye hear the spoons rattlin', rattlin', rattlin',
Once mair ye them agyen.

SPOKEN.—Long life to the Soup Kitchen, says Mick, and hiven be his bed that invented it sez Barney. What's this sez Mick? och! its only a bone, by jabers I thought it was a lump av lane beef. Some moor, Misthress.

I hear them prattlin', prattlin', prattlin',
'Tis the voice of the Callaghan men.

The Sandys frae Scotland, they join in the groop,
Swearin' oatmeal's out-done wi' sic' stuff,
As wi' guid heeland stamocks they swallow the soup
In their wame's till they scarcely can puff,
Then ye hear the spoons rattlin', rattlin', rattlin',
Ye hear them agyen and agyen,

SPOKEN.—It's capital stuff, Sandy, and very economical; a capital remark, says Watty.

CHORUS.

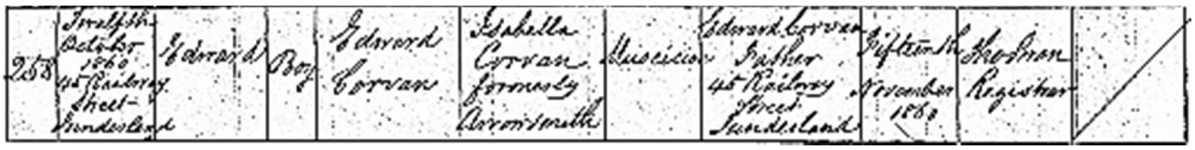
We hear them prattlin', prattlin', prattlin',
'Tis the voice of the Cameron men.

27

The use of 'we' and Corvan's apparent familiarity with the Soup Kitchen hint that he may have had to eat there at times.

Around this time there were 'Ballad-roarers, evil-faced and filthy in person, howling, in twos or three, indecent doggerel for the edification of groups of grown rowdies', and there were 'organ and hurdy-gurdy men and blind fiddlers' at North Shields fair.[28] By October Corvan's former venue, the Fairles Arms Music Hall in Wapping Street, South Shields, had changed hands, and William Coverdale needed singers and dancers. In Newcastle Balmbra engaged Monsieur Thomas Dusoni, with his dogs and monkeys, and a singer of 'Irish comic songs', but by late November he wanted a whole new company.[29]

On 12 October Isabella Corvan bore a son at 45 Railway Street, Sunderland, but the birth was not registered until mid-November and the father was described as a 'Muscicion'.



On 12 December, 'Edvardi Corvin' and 'Isabella Arrowsmith Corvin' had the baby baptised 'Edvardus' at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Newcastle,[30] and Corvan needed new material to keep his act attractive.

John Wilson was born in Petrie's Entry, next to the Jack Tar pub on Sandgate Shore, Newcastle, in 1792. His father made cuckoo clocks and 'Young Cuckoo Jack' became a waterman. He hired out boats at 6d an hour, rescued the drowning and picked up the dead, and by 1829 he had landed his 59th corpse. The Corporation paid him 15s, but less for those he saved, and he was outraged when one survivor gave him 1s. 'Wey, hang thoo,' he is said to have cried, 'aa wish aa'd lettin' thoo droon! Begox, aa wad hev gettin' ten bob at least for findin' thy body!'[31] The mortuary was in the Milk Market at the west end of Sandgate.[32]

33

Late in 1860 the *Newcastle Guardian* noted the death of 'Cuckoo Jack', at the age of 76. He had taken 169 bodies from the Tyne and had a Corporation pension of 5s, but left only a snuff box. The *Guardian* hoped his widow would still get the pension.[34]

Corvan probably revised his five-year-old *Cuckoo Jack*,[35] and used a 'Chant' and five tunes. The first was associated with lyrics which had often been published:[36] the second was locally famous and at least 75 years old;[37] the third was associated with lyrics attributed to John Dyer that had appeared in James Hogg's *Jacobite Relics* in 1819;[38] the fourth may have been a variant of *The Jolly Ploughboy*;[39] and the fifth was associated with a recent tune, *The Wonderful Crocodile*.[40] Corvan's *The Deeth O' Cuckoo Jack* referred to Jack's alleged preference for finding corpses rather than rescuing live people.

1st Air—"Chant."

In wor celebrated metropolis o' the north, Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
A scullorsman leev'd, ca'd Cuckoo Jack, a genus o' the grapplin line!
The soorce o' Colly Tyne an' all its curose channels weel he knew,
So local fyem suin crooned the nyem o' famous and "Cuckoo."
His skill was greet in bringin up the deed, still what mair odd is,
Tis said he little cared for sowls, so he but got the bodies
But noo aw'll end this little rhyme, to chant his dyin' strain,
Confident that and Cuckoo's like we'll niver see again.—

2nd air—"Poor Mary Anne."

November winds blaws cawd, maw hinny!
Deeth follows on my track.
The fall'n snaws, man, shrood maw hinny,
Thou's loosin Cuckoo Jack.
Ta, ta ti pay, ta, ta ti penshin, maw ill deeds, nibors, niver mention,
But elways speak wi' gud intenshin 'boot poor and Cuckoo Jack.

3rd air—"Keel Row."

Fareweel tiv a' me cronies, Keeside and Sandgate Jonies
For aikin ivery bone is, i' this and skin o' mine.
Deed bodies frae the river aw've often teun oot cliver,
Maw equal thor wes nivor for grapplin coaly Tyne.

4th Air—"Down among the Dead Men."

Luika here, luika here, doon belaw, doon belaw,
Pull away, lads, pull away, lads, aw've huiked him—(less jaw!)
This chep myeks a hunred and siventy nine
Dead bodies aw've fund i' the Coally Tyne.
Aw's gannin noo, so frinds, good bye,—
Doon amang the scullormen, doon amang the scullormen
Doon, doon, doon, doon, doon amang the scullormen,
Let Cuckoo lie.

Aw mun rest wi' the rest that aw fund for my fee,
An' aw hope that and Nick winnet grapple for me;
Let maw eppytaff be "Here lies on his back
The chep that fund the deed men, Cuckoo Jack."
Aw's gannin noo, &c.

5th Air—"The Low Back'd Car."

Poor Jacky's senses wandered sair, he grummel'd in his sleep,
An bawled out "Ower bord, who's there floonderin i' the deep?"
And Keelman Bob then wiv a straw gat kitlin Jacky's lugs,
He tell'd him for te get his blaw, nor myek folk human bugs!
Ah! but Jacky wes duin aw' knew, he sneezed, then his beek he blew,
His time 'twis come, for he cuddent sup rum,
So he blaired oot his last Cuckoo, Cuckoo, Cuckoo.
Jack's clay i' burial state noo lay, his last kick suen wis spreed,
For ivery yen 'boot Sangyet knew poor Cuckoo Jack wis deed,
His sporit they say suen fled away 'mang the hundred-and-seventy-nine
Drowned an' scumfished wetery crew he'd picked up frae the Tyne.
Oh! they danced and they laugh'd ha! ha!
And Jacky they chaffed ha! ha!
Then the g host ov a pollis that wis drooned, spoke iz follows
"Thou's joined wor staff, ha! ha!"

6th Air—"The Great Meat Pie."

Noo, hinney Jack, we've g at ye here, so tell us what the news is,
Us Tyneside sporrits off wor bier (beer) glad tidings will amuse us;
Is Ralphy L—tle still alive? hez Douglass yit been captured?
Cum try an' myek wor sporrits flow, wi' Tyneside news enraptured. Ri tol, lol, &c.
Then the ghost ov a sailor that fell owerbord through tyekin ower much liekor,
Says he ti Jack, where's my togs, my purse, an german ticker?
Like Steigny Batter here aw stand, says Jack, odds woonds forsooth!
Thou might easy fynd a warmer borth, but thou speaks the nyeked truth. Ri tol, &c.
They danced aboot poor Jack, an' yelled, ye might heard their screems afar,
Oh lord, says Jack, aw wish aw was seyf an' snug i' the aud Jack Tar,—
Ring oot yor bells for Sangyet smells, to me thou scents like roses,
Compared ti the stench thit nowt can quench, where the deed alive reposes. Ri tol, &c.
They a' myed at Jack, but he off like a shot, he ran like Rowan while yeble,
Aud Nick tried ti follow ti nab the lot, but cuddent slip his keyble;
They still rushed on poor Cuckoo's track, for shelter he wis itchin,
He gov them the slip, for the deevil sent word, he lost him iv Hell's Kitchin. Ri tol, &c.

These lyrics were not printed for well over a year later.[41]

Hell's Kitchen was a fading memory, but the Soup Kitchen was increasingly necessary that winter.

AT a PUBLIC MEETING held on Friday, the 21st day of December, 1860, in the Guildhall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR (Mr ALDERMAN INGLEDEW), IN THE CHAIR.
It was resolved,
First,—On account of the inclemency of the season, and the temporary relief which this charity affords under pressure on the indigent population, arising from stress of weather and the consequent suspension of employment, that the General Soup Kitchen in the Manors be opened on Thursday, the 27th inst. [42]

Securing engagements at the larger halls remained difficult for Corvan.

In January 1861 John Sessford led the band at a grand ball at the Bridge End Inn in Ovingham, Northumberland,[43] and in February he and Miss Chapman from Balmbra's performed with Corvan at the Barrington Band's Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert in Bedlington School Room. The organisers believed that Corvan was engaged in South Shields.

MISS CHAPMAN, from Balmbro's Concert Saloons, Newcastle.
MR. SESSFORD, from do. Newcastle.
NED CORVAN, from the Concert Rooms, South Shields. [44]

Corvan got a longer booking when Mrs Ward reopened the Arcade Music Hall in Sunderland, but while Dusoni and his 'Wonderful Performing Dogs & Monkeys' headed the bill, and Mr Dawson was 'The greatest Irish Comic Singer', Corvan was now 'The Tyne-side Jester, and Modern BILLY PURVIS!'

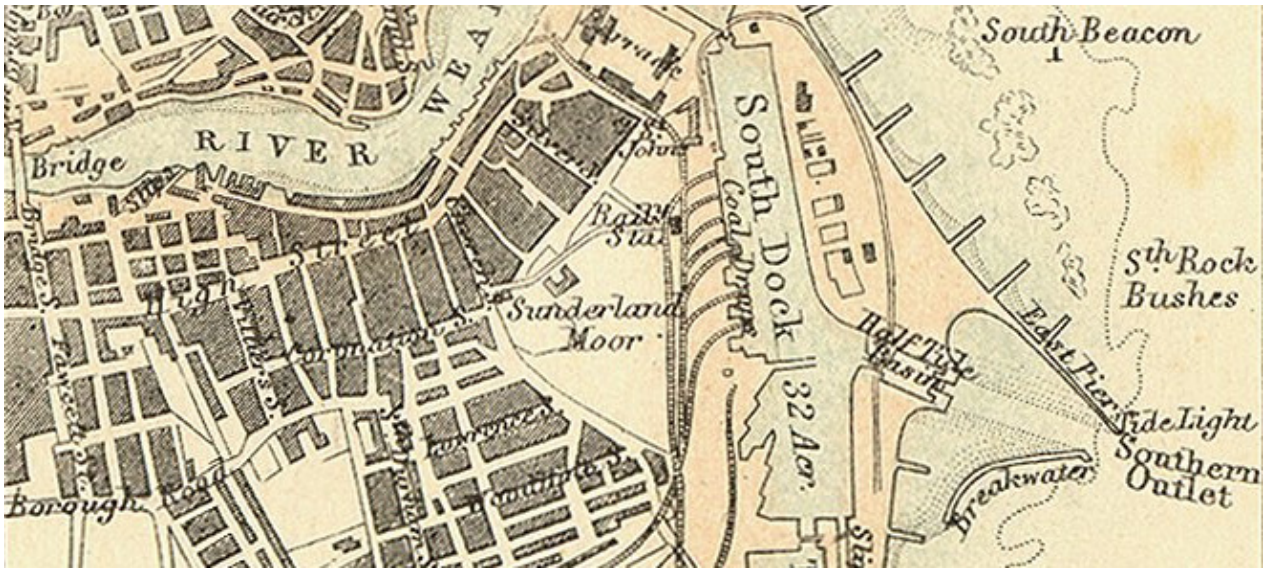
Re-Opening
OF THE
Arcade Music Hall.
Proprietress, Mrs. Ward
IMMENCE ATTRACTION!
First Appearance of
MONS.
DUSONI
With his Wonderful Performing
Dogs & Monkeys
Ned Corvan
The Tyne-side Jester, and Modern
BILLY PURVIS!
MR G.
Dawson!
The greatest Irish Comic Singer
Of the present day.
PIANIST, MR. SENIOR.
First-Class Artistes are engaged of which due notice will be given
ADMISSION.
Gallery Promenade (Private) .. .. .. Sixpence
Pit.. .. .. Threepence
Back Seats.. .. .. Twopence
Doors Open at 6 o'Clock.
Refreshments
Of First-Rate Quality at very moderate prices
R. H. Coleman, Printer, Sunderland. [45]

The printer, R.H. Coleman, has not been traced. *The Era* reported that 'no expense' had been 'spared in getting a good company together' at the 'Old Theatre Music Hall' and Joseph Samuel deserved 'great credit' for the 'stage arrangements'.

In March Corvan advertised manuscript copies of two songs in *The Era*, though neither has been traced.

TWO ORIGINAL COMIC SONGS!
Entitled "TIM MURPHY THE BOXER" (Irish), and "THE COMIC SINGER'S LAMENT" (Patter Song),
Written by EDWARD CORVAN, Author of "Cat-Gut Jem," "Queen's Visit to Charbourg," &c., &c.
MSS. Copies, Eighteen Stamps, Post-free,
Address, E. CORVAN, 45, Railway-street, Sunderland, Durham. 46

In April Corvan, Isabella, six-year-old Isabella junior, a 'Scholar', baby Edward lived south of the 'M' of Sunderland 'Moor'.


 47

Edward Corvan, a 'Musician', told the census-takers that his age was 31, not 33, and his birthplace was Shields, not Liverpool. J.P. Robson, a 52-year-old 'Poet & Auther', and 50-year-old Isabella, also lived at 45 Railway Street, which was evidently a tenement, with a 28-year-old 'Comedian' (actor) and his wife and daughter. Corvan's 60-year-old mother-in-law, Isabella Arrowsmith, a 'Widow' and 'Washerwoman', lived at 1 Dove Court, South Shields, with her son Thomas, a 30-year-old 'Blacksmith', her five-year-old 'grand daughter', Mary Jane Corvan, plus the 61-year-old carpenter, Thomas Purvis, a 'Boarder'.

Corvan evidently had some success with *Tom Sayers*, and he set *Bobby the Coxer* to the US tune of *Pat's Curiosity Shop*, whose lyrics were about an Irishman's 'museum'.[48] His narrator claimed to have beaten 'Bendigo' (William Abendnego Thompson) and 'mugged' Inspector Cousins in Newcastle, and evidently read the sporting papers.

Aboot "fistiana" and' fightin', skull-bruizers may blether an' crack,
Aw's the lad the P.R. can enlighten—man, aw've walloped the yell o' the pack;
Tom Paddock, aw suin sent him muzy, Tipton Slasher aw knocked out o' time,
And Bendy aw doubled up mazy, smash! nyen can touch me in my prime.

CHORUS.

On me thou mun place greet reliance, for Boxin' thou'll say aw's a cure,
De ye think thit aw's not up ti science, howay oot! aw's yor man for the Moor.

Wiv the bowld Johnny Wawker aw won tee, his backers they hoyed up the sponge,
Bob Travers, the Blacky, aw've dune, tee, wiv a fine upper cut an' a lunge;
The fighters ti me aw cums fleein, they aw ken me morit an' worth,
Aw trained Renwicks, Bill Cleghorn, and Heenan, an' a' the best men i' the North. Chorus.

Jim Mace an' Tom Sayers may pass muster, byeth gud men we a' mun agree,
But for a' their greet battles an' bluster, they've byeth had to forfeit to me;
Harry Powlson, and Cobley, maw kitten, aw've hammered them black i' the face,
Dan Thomas and Jones's fine hittin, wi' this *Chicken* wis awl oot o' place. Chorus.

Aw worry the pollis i' dozens, ti beat me they try a' they can,
But since aw mugged Inspector Cousins, they swear aw's the devil's awn man,
Hoots, fightin' to me's nobbit pastime, aw's always first in for a pelt,
So Mace aw mun fight for the last time, then swagger aboot wiv a belt. Chorus'

Wi' Jim Ward aw've had murry meetin's, but then iv a jovial way,
Their music an' toddy-care meetin's, aw drives the blue divels away;
Ti Langham's aw oft pay a visit, he's a decent and covey is Nat,
Gosh, his wife telled me when he hooked it to walk in an' hing up mee hat! Chorus.

In Newbold's grand pictor awm stuck np wiv a' the greet boxers aroond,
There aw stand wi mee eyes shut to luik up at the fight for the four hundred pounds;
Lads, there's not a gud fightor amang them, its boonce and mock courage they've got,
Nobbit giz a gud blaw oot at Mackey's sowl! aw'l perish the yell o' the lot. Chorus.

Like Tom Sayer's aw'l suin gan oot starrin' for a five-pun note ivery set-to.
Gosh, Cab! aw's the genus for sparrin', Bobby the Boxer's real Tyneside true blue;
Aw defeated bowld Crawley an' Crockett, an' vanquished wi' ease Jarry Noon,
An" aw've a challenge just now in my pocket ti fight wi' the man i' the moon. Chorus.

But noo aw'l away ti me trainin', aw'l suin be i' fine trim agyen,
Aboot three or fower styen aw want gainin', then aw'l strip wi' the brightest o' men;
So ta ta, ye bowld sportin' fellows, the time aw prepare for the strife,
When aw knock oot the puff o' King's bellows, what a worry there'll be for *Bell's Life*. Chorus. 49

The narrator's claim to have an invitation to fight 'the man i' the moon' fatally undermined all his bragging and the situation of Tyneside workers had become uncomfortable after a civil war in the USA and disrupted trade.

Corvan ran a 'free and easy' at Newcastle's Easter Hopping, where 'every man was free to drink whatever he chose, and to any extent, provided he paid for it, upon which a song was thrown in for nothing'.[50] He reused the tune of *Lucy Neal* for *The Porterpokeman's Lament; or, Gladstone's Budget*, whose narrator was a Quayside labourer.

Air---"Lucy Neal."

Aw's a porterpokeman's shadow, intirely rags and byens.
Creeping like a hungry snail, half-dead among the styeans;
Oh! curse the Budget, aw'd hang each thunerin' thief,
For raisin' rum and whisky, wine, brandy, bread, and beef.
If aw wis Tarzy Warzy, or awl' Mackey's, men aw'd wish
Thit fokes wad drop off butcher meat an' leeve on ham an' fish;
For Gladstone's raised wor sporrits, but we cannot raise the tin,
Then let us pray for better times ti blaw oot ivery skin.

CHORUS.

For Gladstone's raised wor sporrits, but we cannot raise the tin,
Then let us pray for better times ti blaw oot ivery skin.

Mutton comes but once a-week, aw'l in a lump—the heed,
Sometimes a bit and cow aw chow, the butcher kills when deed;
As for styeks, aw seldom see them, tho' sometimes a bit and horse
A 'tween maw teeth aw chow for spite; oh, curse the Budget, curse.
Oh! cruel was the butcher's crew that plunged uz inti grief
Bi raisin' wor bit mutton, an' leevin' Yarmouth beef;
Oh! Scotch an' Yarmouth bloaters—a luxury iver dear,
The Chancellor's grub's not half see sweet as this blynd sailor here.
CHORUS.

In former days wi' hevin' strikes we cuddent raise wor chops;
Gox! if a poor sowl's droppin' noo he cannot raise his drops-
Aw'd like to hev a blaw-oot, noo, but frinds they're bad ti fynd,
Oh! for a glorious feed o' stew, but whe's ti raise the wynd.

Frae morn ti neet upon the kee, thou'll see me ivery day
The skeleton o' happier days, fadin' fast away;
Ony mortal thing aw'l eat, frev pickled eels ti sprats,
Aw've torned a reglor sassidge, man, so luk oot for yor cats.

SPOKEN.—Confound the Yankee war an' the Budget, says I. Budget, aw's gettin' si week i' maw body-props that aw can scarcely budge it. When a chep begins ti tawk aboot eatin' cats, it's a sign he's gannin' ti the the dogs. It wad puzzle ye ti tell what Rifle Corps aw belang tee. Maw regiment's caw'd the Casselgarth splodgers, or the Fly Artillery. The last engagement aw wis in aw marched under a heavy wi' two brigades o' rifles, an' one thoosin' guns o' heavy cavalry. We left Chung-sing-rung one afternoon afore dayleet, an' jornied on ti Calpee, where we fund a woonded Sepoy choked ti deeth wiv a baggage-waggon. Aw wis followed biv a body o' the enemy; they fled when they saw maw noble form. Troop efter troop surrounded me; aw defended mawsel wi' desperashun until aw wis run thro' the body be a company ov artillery thit cam ti maw assistance. But sowlgerin's up ti nowt; aw pitched it up; they played me oot o' the barracks wi' musical honours—aw wis drummed oot. Honesty's not the best policy noo adays—the biggest rogues hez the best luck. Sayers an' Heenan myed mair brass wi' fightin' two hoors, than an honest workin' man cud work for in a lifetime. Aw wish aw had thier chance. Aw's that thin they cuddent hit me, an' them that strikes at shadows often hits the wall! Cheps, aw's leevin' on the recollection o' what aw eat when aw wis young. Since the rise in iverything aw've leev'd on onything—cabbage-leeves, burnt corks, and hats often *felt* on me stomick; reed harrin', door-knockers, an' the tother, neet aw bowlted the door.

CHORUS.

For Gladstone raised wor sporrits, but we cannot raise the tin,
Then let us pray for happier times, ti blaw oot ivery skin. [51]

Had Corvan given his birthplace as Shields and not Liverpool so as to be able to claim Poor Law rights?[52]

Matt Brady, a previously unpublished Corvan song, probably dates from around this time. He used an early 18th century Irish tune, *Alley Croker*, which was associated with *The Unfortunate Miss Bailey*. It had been written for George Colman's play, *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*, in 1803, but its lyrics were still being published in the 1860s. They were about a young woman who was seduced by a soldier and hanged herself, but she haunted her seducer, and it was also known as *Miss Bailey's Ghost*.[53]

A Pitman once when he was bund
His nyme it was Matt Brady
And he had getten sixty Pund
Smash says Mall aws be a Lady
Aws hev a Ruff – aws hev a Muff
For aw hae got the Chin off
And a Parasowl baith Lairge and wide
Te keep baith sun & wind off

(Chorus) Oh Matt Brady Unfortunate Matt Brady
Iver since the time that wor Mally Turned a Lady

A Ruff says Matt gans round thy Neck
A Muff's thaw hands to keep in
Aws gan down te the Butcher Bank
And there aws buy a sheep skin
It will make a Muff baith Lairge and wide
If aw can get yen strong eneuff
And a Lambs tayle will make a Ruff
If aw can get yen lang eneuff

Chorus &c –

Matt gat a muff – he got a Ruff
Now then says he if aw was deed
Aws sure aw canna tell the nyme
O that thou gans abune the head
To the Shop he gans te the man he says
Dis thou ken Mally Brady
She wants a thing te gan abune her head
For shes grown a greet big lady

Chorus

Indeed the Shopman quick replies
I don't know Mrs Brady
But Umberella now are worn
Both by Gentleman and Lady
Its not a rummerella aw want
But its something just the same ont
Oh its perhaps a Parasol
Aye for Parish yon sowl's the nyme ont

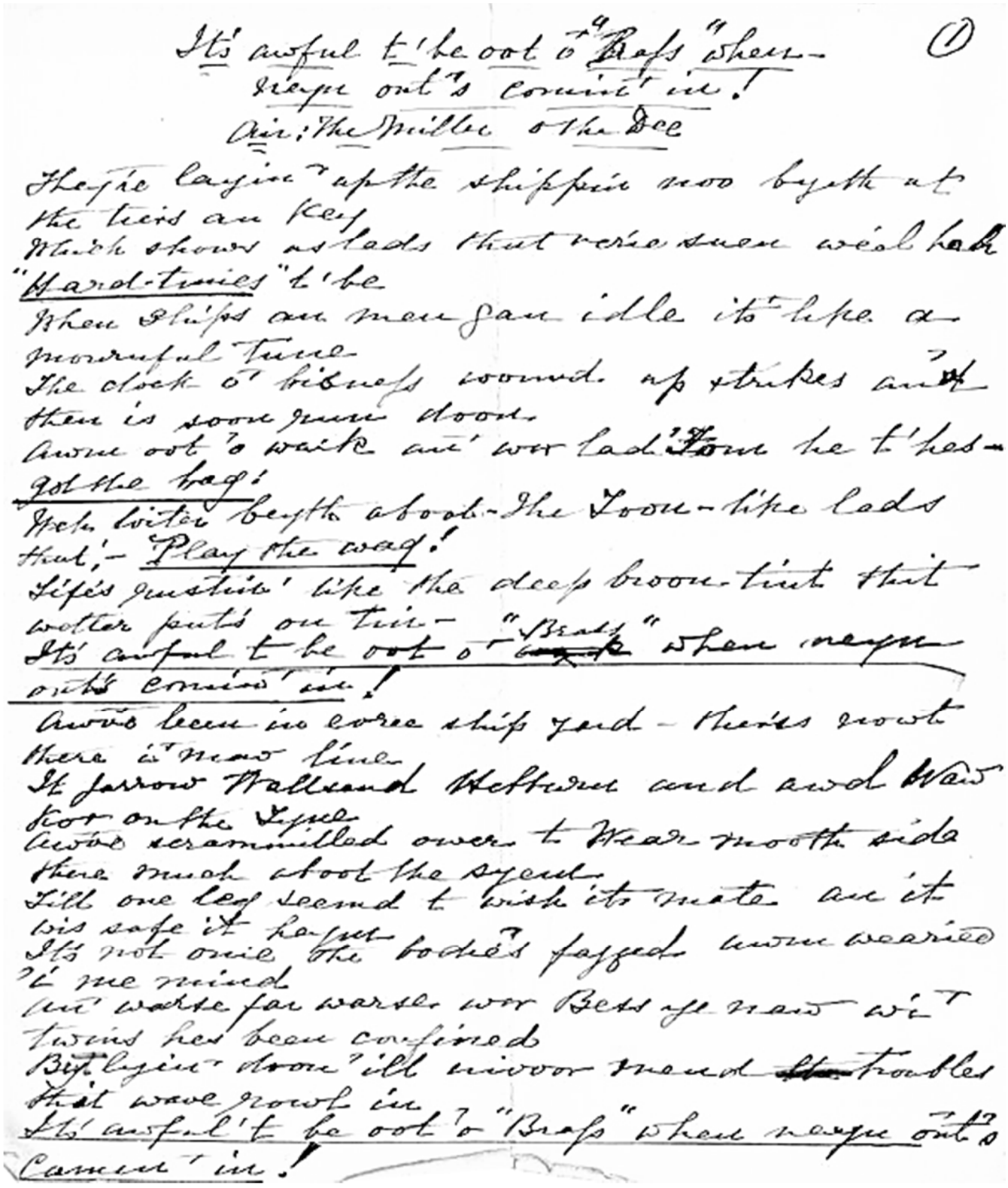
Chorus

Now such a swell she cut wi' these
Her Ruff her Muff her Parasowl
That Matt he dur not walk beside her
She says he luiked just like a feul

Noo then says he if aw had a thousand Pund
Not a farden on thee awd ware ont
Unless te buy a good horsewhip
Aye an thou should hae thee share ont

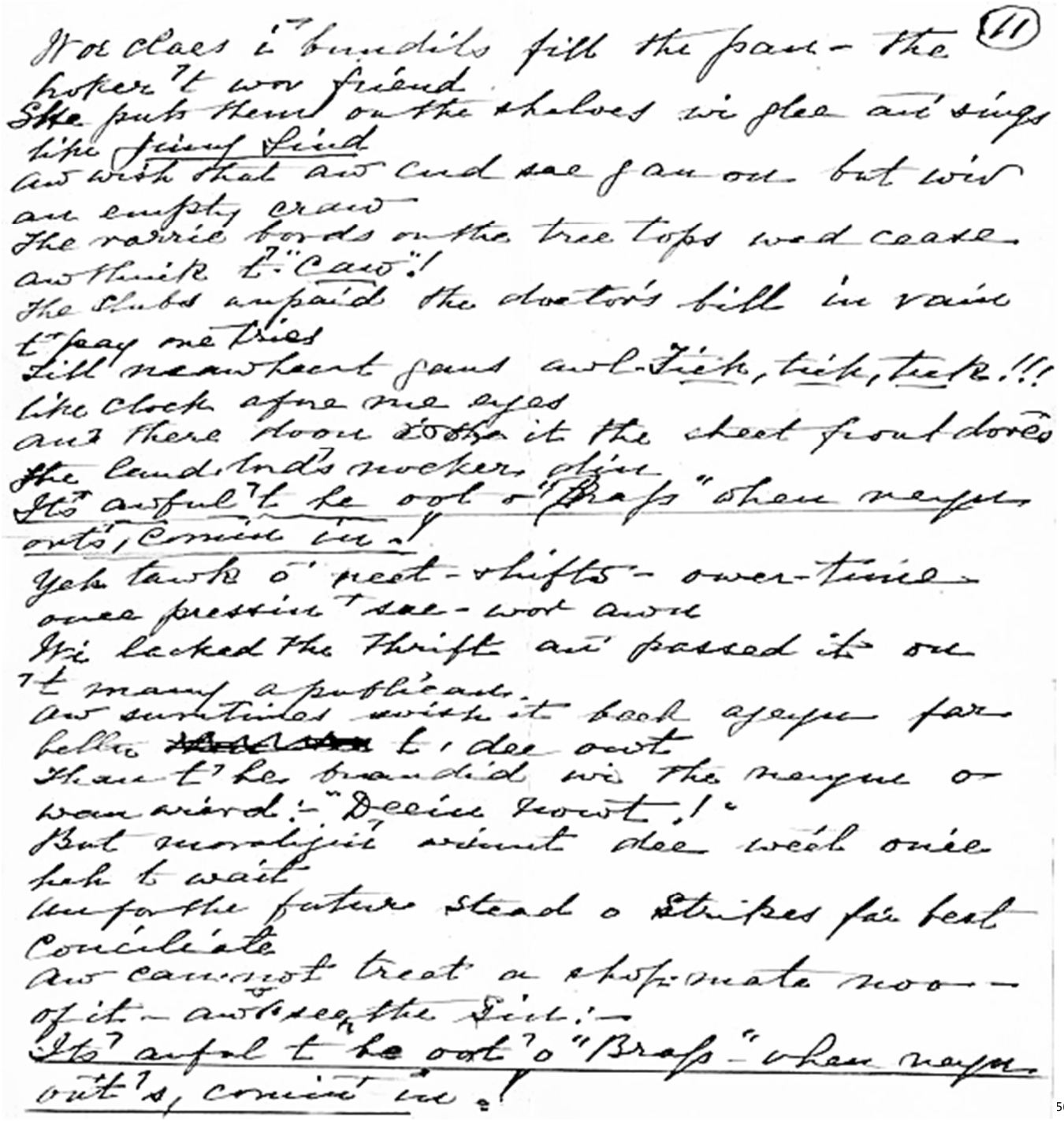
Chorus – [54]

Another previously unpublished Corvan song was set to a tune associated with Isaak Bickerstaffe's libretto for the comic opera *Love in a Village*, which was published in 1763,[55] and the narrator was an unemployed Tyneside worker.



It's awful t'be oot o' "Brass" when
neyps ont's comin' in!
Air: The Miller o the Dee

Hes'e layin' up the shippin noo byeth at
the tiers an key
Mush shows us leads that we're seen weel hab
"Hard-times" t'be
When Ships an men gan idle it's like a
mournful Tune
The clock o' bisness wound up strikes ant
then is soon gane doon
Aware oot o' waik an' wor Lads gone he t'hes-
got the bag!
Yeh winter beyth abroad - the Toon-like Lads
feul, - Play the wag!
Life's gustin' like the deep broon-tint that
water puts on tin -
It's awful t be oot o' "Brass" when neyps
ont's comin' in!
Aware been in every ship yard - there's nowt
there is now time
At Jarrow Wallsend Hebburn and awd Wan
Foot on the Tyne
Aware scrammilled ower t'wear mooth sida
there much afoot the syeud
Till one leg seemd t wish it's mate an it
wis safe it keyet
It's not onie the bodies fayed aware wearied
o' me mind
An' warke far warse wor Bess nor man wi'
twins her bean confined
But gyin' doon ill mivver mend the troubles
that wave growt in
It's awful t be oot o "Brass" when neyps ont o'
Camen' in!


(11)
If ee claes i' bundils fill the pan - the
hoper't wor friend
Sike pubs them on the shelves wi plee an' sings
like jiving fiind
an' with that an' cud nae fan ou but wis
an empty craw
The rairie birds on the tree tops wad caake
an think t' "Caw"!
The Clubs unpaid the doctor's bill in vain
t' pay me dies
Till meanwhaat pans an' Tick, tick, tick!!!
like clock afore me eyes
an' there stoon lookin it the sheet frae door
the landlord's rocker dijin
It's awful't be oot o' "Brass" when neyes
outs, comin in!
Yeh tawk o' neet-shifts - ower-time
ance pressin' nae - wor awn
It's lacked the Thrift an' passed it on
't many a publican.
An sumtimes with it back ageyn fae
hell to dee oot
Haun't be brandid wi the mayne or
wan wird:- "Decine Scout!"
But morality wisnt dee weel onie
seh t wait
wi for the future stead o Stripes fae beat
Conciliate
an cannot treat a chastenate noo -
of it - an see the End:-
It's awful t be oot o "Brass" - when neyes
out's, comin in!

56

Corvan evidently had very few engagements at large halls and may well have been failing to keep Isabella in the manner to which she had become accustomed. His mother had died, his brother Matthew was probably at sea and their brother Thomas was in Australia.

Chinese miners had struck gold at Canton Lead near Ararat, in Victoria, in 1857. By 1860, if not before, Thomas and Sarah Corven lived in Ararat and had a son they called William Thomas. Mary followed in 1861, but she was to die three years later.

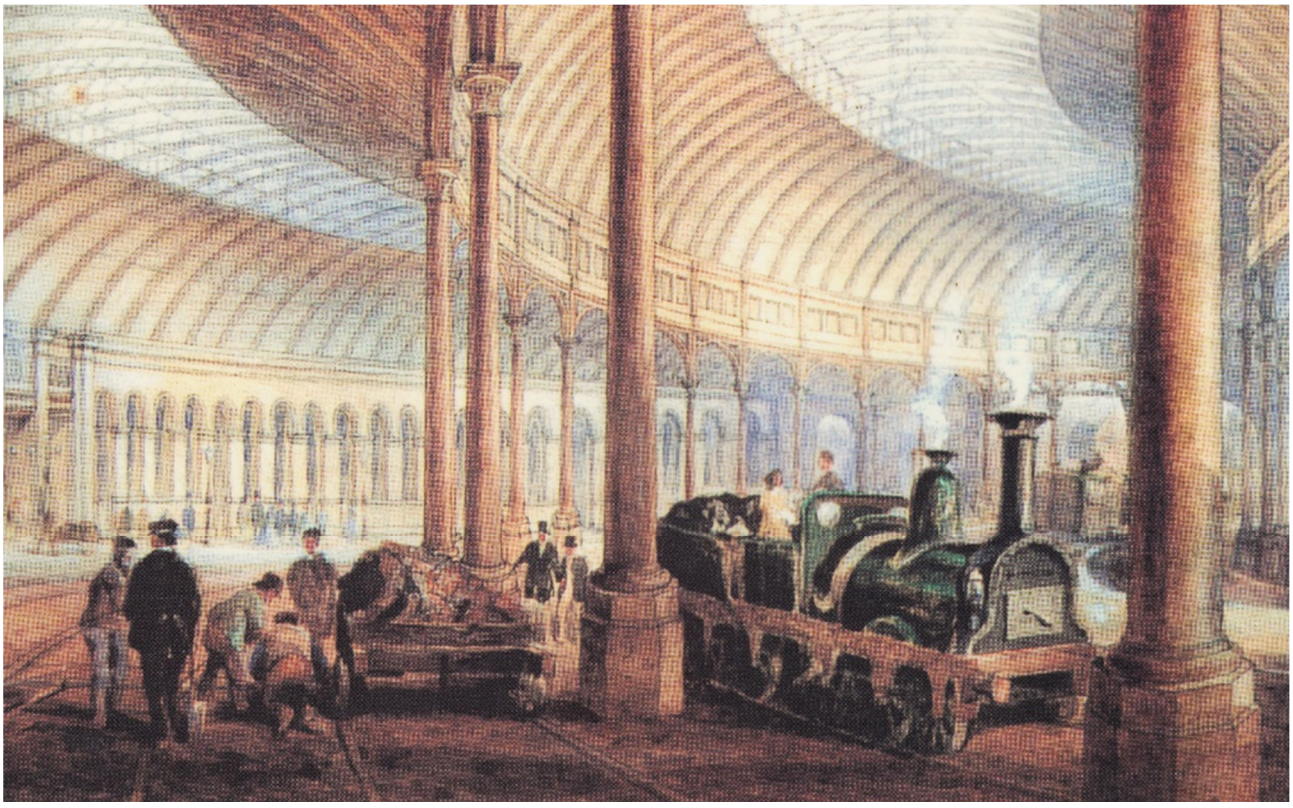
12. The Tyne Concert Hall

Samuel Stanley had travelled all over Europe as a general's servant and was at the battle of Waterloo in 1815, but he was in London when George William was born in 1823. He played in an amateur theatre company as a boy, managed a provincial theatre when he was 20 and later acted in leading theatres across Britain.[1] Around 1850 he and Emilie Bache, the teenage daughter of a Scarborough merchant captain, were in the same company in Dublin and got married. Stanley later managed South Shields Theatre Royal, and in 1854, when he was a leading actor at Newcastle Theatre Royal,[2] he and Emilie settled there.[3] In 1857 George and John Sangar briefly leased the huge old wooden circus building in Neville Street. Other lessees followed, and in summer 1860 Stanley applied for a dramatic licence for the circus at Manors Police Court. The Theatre Royal proprietors objected, and the magistrates refused a licence,[4] so Stanley borrowed money,[5] applied to the Gateshead magistrates and they licensed a temporary theatre in East Street.[6] In November South Shields magistrates granted Stanley a two-month licence for the Central Hall, Chapter Row,[7] and the Newcastle magistrates did not prevent a new concert hall from opening.

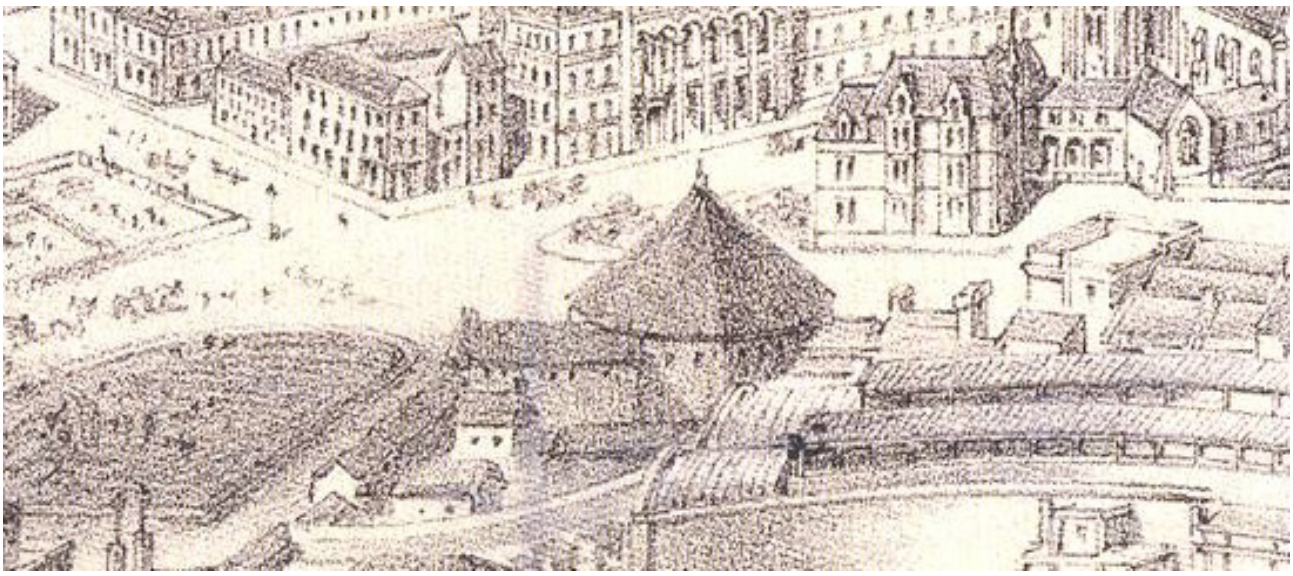
Adam Elphinstone Donald was born in Scotland in 1826, but the family were living in Newcastle by 1830. Adam's father was a prosperous watchmaker,[8] and by 1850 Adam was a watchmaker and the Provincial Grand Secretary of the Northumberland and Berwick-on-Tweed Freemasons. In 1851 he married 24-year-old Margaret Forster Jamieson,[9] and by 1855 he had shops in Gibson Street and Grey Street.[10] By 1856 he owned the Grainger Hotel,[11] at 36 Grainger Street,[12] and by 1859 it was the Grainger Hotel and Billiard Rooms.[13] Late in 1860 Donald announced that a 'refreshment ticket' to enter his licenced 'Concert Supper and Billiard Room' on Christmas Eve would cost 6d.[14] In April 1861 the 41-year-old 'Inn Keeper' claimed to have been born in Newcastle, like 34-year-old Margaret, but their seven-year-old daughter had been born at Gallowhill Hall, west of Morpeth, at the home of Charles Humble, a 'Fundholder' in the stock market.

In Newcastle 50-year-old John and 49-year-old Isabella Balmbra lived at the Wheat Sheaf Inn with two servants, 23-year-old Elizabeth Eltringham from Durham and 18-year-old Margaret Collins from Carlisle. Charles Easthope, a 'Professor of Music', lived at in St. Martin's Court, off Newgate, with his wife Margaret, and three children. At the same address were John Sessford, a 'Watchmaker', his wife Mary, a teenage son who was an 'Engine Wright' and four girls aged seven to 14.

The Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer let spirit and beer-shop owners sell small quantities for consumption off the premises,[15] and allowed beer-shop owners take out wine licences. The country's 100,000 teetotallers influenced at least a million other people and their strategy was to keep husbands at their firesides, discourage female gossip, condemn wife-beating, criticise men who neglected their families and support drink-free institutions such as mechanics' institutes, libraries and the few music and concert halls that admitted women and children.[16] Balmbra and Donald ran 'respectable' halls and stars from London and elsewhere regularly reached Newcastle by train.

 [17]

The Neville Street circus with its pointed roof was next door to the Central Station.

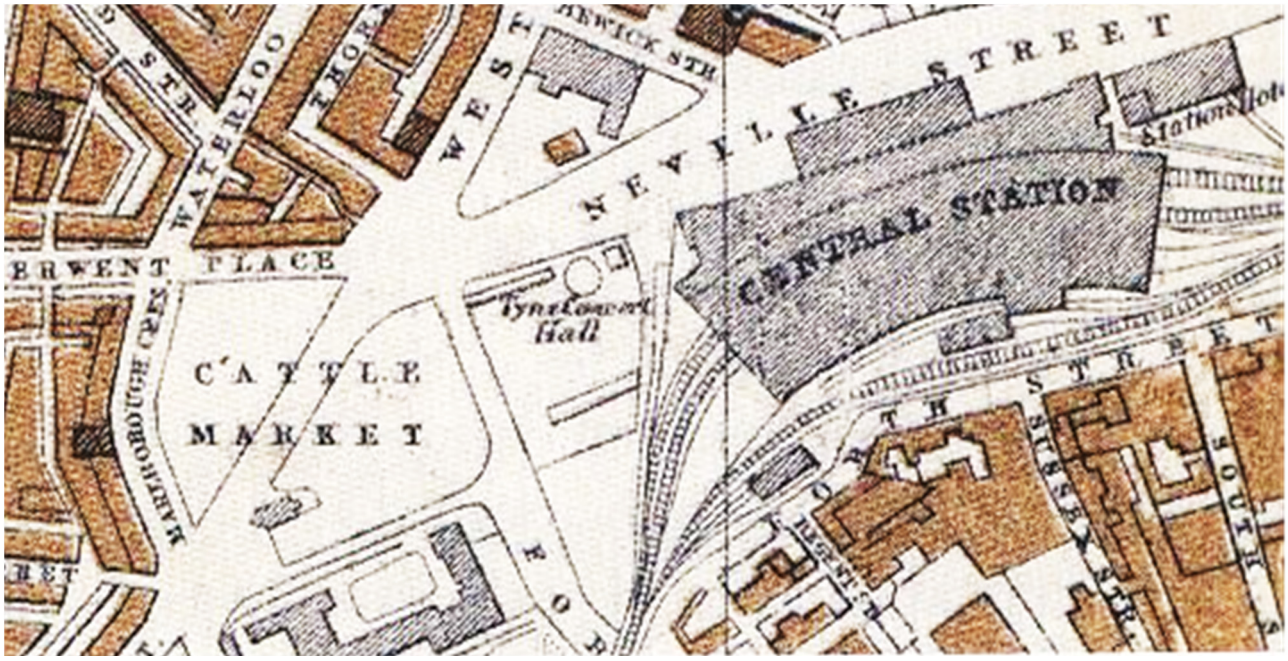


18

In May *The Era* reported that Balmbra and Donald had 'good houses', but the Grainger Concert and Supper Rooms were more 'fashionable'.[19] In June Stanley applied for a six-month licence for the circus at Manors Police Court. He

> observed that in 1787, when the Theatre Royal was established, the population of Newcastle did not exceed 22,000, since that it had increased to 109,000, yet still there was only one theatre in the town. The population of Newcastle and Gateshead together was upwards of 150,000, and there was not another instance of two boroughs in the United Kingdom, adjacent to each other, having only one theatre. The character of the entertainments … would be of an operatic and amphitheatre description, and distinct from those performed at the Theatre Royal. The building belonged to Mr. Robson, the contractor, and … he intended to make such alterations in it as would comfortably accommodate the audience, as well as satisfy the Town Surveyor. Mr. Stanley … had fulfilled engagements in most of the provincial towns, and produced several high testimonials, together with a memorial signed by a number of ratepayers residing in the immediate vicinity of the Circus. Mr. Story opposed the application on behalf of Mr. Davis, the lessee of the Theatre Royal, and contended that the present theatre was fully equal to the dramatic requirements of the town. The magistrates retired, and in a few moments the Mayor and Mr. Pollard returned, and announced that as there were only three magistrates in favour of granting the licence, and as the law required that four should sign it, the application was dismissed, though, of course, Mr. Stanley could renew it.[20]

In July Stanley announced in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* that the 'commodious building' in Neville Street was 'undergoing extensive Alterations' to 'render it equal to any, and superior to most Establishments of its kind in the Provinces'. The 'Scenic Embellishments and Decorations' would be by 'a distinguished Artist', the 'Vocal and Instrumental performers' would be the 'Most Popular and Talented Ladies and Gentlemen in the Musical Profession' and 'neither expense nor trouble will be spared to make the entire Establishment in every way worthy of the patronage of the people of Tyneside'. Gallery seats would cost 3d, those in the 'Area and Side elevations for two thousand Persons' would be 6d and the 'handsome Box Promenade' 1s, and Stanley invited tenders for the franchise to serve alcohol in the 'extensive Refreshment saloon' adjoining the hall.[21]



22

In August Balmbra had a marquee on Newcastle Town Moor for the Grand Volunteer review,[23] and Stanley announced that his hall would open later that month.[24] The *Chronicle* reported that the Tyne Concert Hall was 'besieged with an eager crowd' on the opening night and 'numbers were turned away from the pit and gallery doors'. The interior had changed dramatically.

> On the north side, where the boxes formerly were, an extremely neat and commodious stage has been erected, with a large orchestra in front. The centre, which constitutes the pit, has been fitted with comfortable looking seats, with backs attached, while the whole of the raised seats on each side have been thrown together and form the gallery. The promenade is open all round the building, with seats on each side, as is the best part of the house, 'the boxes'.

The 'first-Class Company' from 'the principal Metropolitan and Provincial Music Halls' included 'Artists in every Department, Vocal and instrumental', and the 'large and comfortable refreshment rooms' served alcohol. It was the largest concert hall in north east England, holding 2,840 people, and had 'crowded houses nightly',[25] but the *Newcastle Guardian* was unenthusiastic.

> Concert Halls, or Casinos, are springing among us; and on Saturday night last Mr. G. Stanley opened the Circus, Neville-street, as one of these singing places. More than 2,000 persons obtained admission, 'whilst hundreds were turned away;' and yet the attempts of skilled musicians to establish cheap concerts … must have been above the comprehension of the working men.[26]

The *Shields Daily Gazette* noted the 'most successful opening' of this 'popular place of amusement', in spite of the Newcastle magistrates' decision, and 'not only was the house full, but the entertainment was excellent.[27]

In September Stanley applied for a dramatic licence with the support of the attorney Edward Glynn, but the Theatre Royal lessee and proprietors were opposed.

> The arguments on both sides varied little from those made on the previous occasion; except that the good behaviour shown by large numbers who frequent Mr Stanley's concert room was advanced by Mr GLYNN as a specimen what might he expected from similar audiences when spectators of dramatic representations. - The Bench retired to consider their decision; and, on their return into court, the Mayor said that they had decided on not granting a licence. Mr GLYNN said that, the act of parliament made a licence legal which was signed by four of the magistrates by whom it was heard; and he therefore asked the Mayor to sign it as one of the four. The Mayor said he would not act in opposition to his brother magistrates. - The court was crowded; and, on the declaration of their worships' decision, some degree of disapprobation was shown.[28]

The *Newcastle Daily Journal* reported that the magistrates took five minutes to reach their decision,[29] but the *Guardian* commended the temperance lobby.

> The Temperance party have, of late, put forth the most vigorous exertions to induce the magistrates not to grant fresh licences … and in Newcastle their exertions have borne fruit, for out of thirty-nine applications at the last Brewster Sessions the Bench only granted one application. The magistrates seem as chary in establishing new theatres as new public houses … but if Mr Stanley were allowed a licence, why not Balmbra, and Mr Henry Smith [*sic*], and any other person who caters to the public amusement? Why *two* theatres and no more! … The duty of granting or withholding such licences is cast upon the magistracy, and we have no wish to limit or impugn their discretion.

The 'places of amusement are springing up among us like mushrooms' and Hugh Smith's Victoria Rooms in Grey Street were 'the most comfortable looking and spacious'. A week later one man confessed that he and two others broke into Mr. Grierson's shoe shop after they left the Tyne, and one was discharged, but two were sentenced to four months in prison.

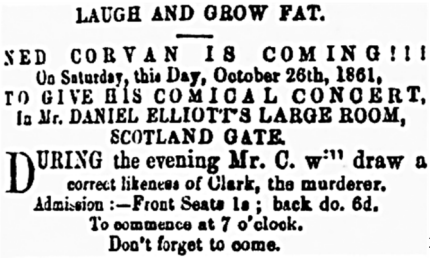
Stanley wrote to the *Guardian* and denied that he ran a 'Casino'.

> A Casino is public dancing room; there are no singing, acrobatic, or negro entertainments at Casinos. People pay a uniform charge of a shilling, and for that sum they are permitted to enter and join in a dance. … You ask 'Why limit the theatres in Newcastle to two any more than to one!' I ask the same question. The Theatre is either a bad institution or good one - it ought to be either encouraged or discouraged. If it is bad, the Theatre Royal should be closed; if is good, the more establishments of the kind that there are the better. Why should an actor have more restriction imposed on him than an acrobat, a singer, or equestrian performer! If Newcastle could support half-a-dozen circuses all the year round, there is no power to prevent them exhibiting. Why should there be any power to prevent the establishment of three or a dozen theatres if the population choose to support them! I cannot see why I, an actor, have not as much right to follow a profession free from all magisterial control ... Surely Shakespeare is as great a teacher as M. Blondin is, or Mr Ducrow was.
>
> I have asked the Newcastle magistrates a respectful manner, four times, to be allowed to follow my own profession, on my own stage, and my own premises. I have proved by the evidence of the police officers, that my establishment is conducted in an orderly and respectable manner and have offered to produce the most unexceptionable securities for the good management of hall in future. Yet they persist in refusing this small boon.
>
> I can only account for their unjust treatment towards me by supposing that they have stronger sympathy for the supposed interests of the proprietors of the Theatre Royal, than for the welfare of a poor and struggling player.

The editor cut out a comment that 'refers to other entertainments which we have no wish to praise or disparage',[30] but *The Era* noted that Manchester magistrates had granted the town's third theatrical licence to the Free Trade Hall. Over 30,000 people had visited the Tyne in less than three weeks and Stanley had left court with 'a number of his friends'.[31]

In October the *Journal* commended the success of the Licenced Victuallers' Association's 'Pic-Nic' and their dinner at the Wheat Sheaf, where 'numerous toasts' were 'interspersed with songs, including one most laughable piece, composed by Mr. J.P. Robson, which was sung with telling effect by Mr. Wm. Thompson'. Soon after Thompson was at the Bankruptcy Court,

charged with getting his relations to pawn clothes that had not been paid for. His mother Lydia insisted that she ran the business and never consulted her son, who was 'engaged in his theatrical pursuits', and while he acknowledged that she had given him money, he knew nothing about the pawning since he had been in Glasgow, Manchester and other places. The hearing was adjourned,[32] and he was set at liberty. Late that month the *Morpeth Herald* announced a one-night show.


LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

NED CORVAN IS COMING!!!
On Saturday, this Day, October 26th, 1861,
TO GIVE HIS COMICAL CONCERT,
In Mr. DANIEL ELLIOTT'S LARGE ROOM,
SCOTLAND GATE.
DURING the evening Mr. C. will draw a correct likeness of Clark, the murderer.
Admission :—Front Seats 1s ; back do. 6d.
To commence at 7 o'clock.
Don't forget to come.

[33]

Scotland Gate was a hamlet near Choppington, 16 miles north of Newcastle.

In November *The Era* noted that Thompson's 'comic local effusions' at the Wheat Sheaf were 'most amusing' and Tom Handford and Thomasi Dusoni were at the Tyne.[34] The *Guardian* reported that the Tyne 'continues to attract large audiences, and the company nightly receive warm and enthusiastic reception', while Stanley 'spares no expense to cater for the public amusement'. Donald advertised that he had 'REBUILT AND FITTED UP A LARGE AND MAGNIFICENT BAR' at 'an immense expense' and made a 'PRIVATE AND SEPARATE ENTRANCE' to his 'elegant Concert Hall'.[35] The *Journal* reported that Stanley had arrived at Manors Police Court with a 'number of his friends'. He stressed that he wanted 'to present an entertainment of a higher and more intellectual nature', including 'the works of our great dramatists' and 'the first works of modern dramatic literature'. For almost three months he had staged 'vocal and instrumental music' and 'occasional performances of an acrobatic description'.

> No intoxicating beverages had been sold, either by himself or anybody else; and though the building had often been crowded to the doors, the utmost good order had prevailed. He was prepared to enter into any bond they might demand; and he had two respectable securities; whilst, if he did not conduct the place properly, their Worships had power to withdraw the licence, which he only wished to have granted to him for three months on trial. He trusted that at the end of that time he should appear before the Bench and return the licence untarnished and uninjured.

The Theatre Royal proprietors were not opposed, but the magistrates' refusal of a licence was 'received with hisses',[36] and a *Chronicle* journalist entered the fray.[37]

Sidney Miles Hawkes was born in Stansted, Essex, in 1822,[38] into a wealthy family. He passed his law exams at the Middle Temple in London in 1841,[39] married in 1843, and was an honorary secretary of the Italian Refugee Fund in 1849.[40] By 1851 he was a brewer in St. Pancras,[41] and he owned the Swan Brewery in Walham-Green by 1852. He published a pamphlet against adulterated beer,[42] but bankrupted an innkeeper.[43] In 1854 his brewery was in Britten-street, Chelsea,[44] and the news of his bankruptcy was published in Newcastle.[45] He sold the brewery to his friend James Stansfield, the Liberal politician,[46] obtained a bankruptcy certificate and was discharged in 1855.[47] Hawkes took a dagger to Giovanni Pianori in Paris, but he failed to assassinate Emperor Napoleon and was guillotined. Hawkes forged passports for Italian revolutionary nationalists,[48] and in 1858 he took money from Joseph Cowen to Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi.[49] By spring 1861 39-year-old Hawkes, a non-practising barrister, and his second wife, 27-year-old Emily, lived in Daventry with seven children aged seven or under, and he accepted Cowen's offer of a job on the *Newcastle Chronicle*. In November 'Elfin' revealed that some Newcastle magistrates had a financial interest in refusing Stanley's application and one had hinted that the North Eastern Railway, which owned the site, might 'pull down' the Tyne if he succeeded. Next day Stanley advertised 'The Star Company of the North', 'licenced by Public opinion but not by the magistrates', in the *Chronicle*, which urged him to 'take the law into his own hands'.[50] The *Courant* noted that there would be no drama at the Theatre Royal from Christmas to the end of February, since it was staging a pantomime,[51] and the *Guardian* carried an advertisement for 'GRAINGER HOTEL CONCERT-HALL'. Stanley had had 'two respectable sureties' to guarantee good conduct, but the magistrates had taken only ten minutes to refuse a licence.[52]

In December 'Mr Ed. Corvan, the talented violinist, singer and local songwriter', was at Balmbra's, where 'Mr W. Thompson, the local singer', enjoyed a 'well patronised' benefit. There was to be a 'Grand Evening Concert' for the veteran sculler Harry Clasper at the Tyne and 'Talented Artistes and a host of Local talent' would appear.[53] *The Era* noted that Stanley had 'granted the use of the building' without charge,[54] while the *Journal* reported the 'good attendance' and that the 'vocal and instrumental concert performers were all up to the mark'. A week later there was a 'numerous attendance' of magistrates at Manors Police Court.[55] Stanley applied for a three-month licence and presented a petition 'signed by upwards of 70 ratepayers residing in the immediate neighbourhood of the Hall', and another 'signed by 5,258 residents and ratepayers of the Borough, praying the Bench to grant the prayer of Mr Stanley'. This time it took the magistrates 40 minutes to refuse.[56]

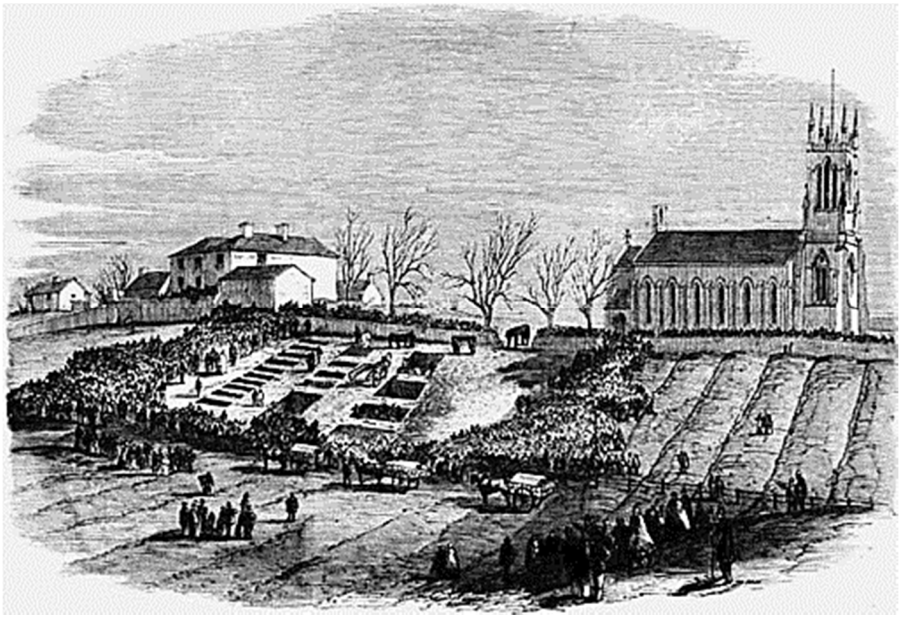
It was getting near Christmas and *Chater's Illustrated Comic Tyneside Almanac for 1862* claimed to be 'written I' the Northumberland Dialect egzackly hoo the Newcassel Foaks tawk. By J. P. Robson … an' uthor clivvor cheps a' owthor belangin Newcassel, G'yetsid, or sumways else'. In addition to anti-Irish and anti-negro cartoons and comments, Robson noted that 22 December would be 'Varry stormy - Ned Corvin [*sic*] three sheets i' the wind'. 'Ansors to wor Correspondens' included 'NED

CORVIN. – Poat Close leeves biv hizsel wiv hiz wife an' bairns. Lord Pawmorson knaws hiz 'dress, 'caz he dress'd poor Jack. Write tiv him, and send that lemmonkolly sang o' "THE FISHERMEN HUNG THE MONKEY"'. Robson advertised his own services.

All you that wish your names to be
Announced in lines of melody –
Who telling Prose and Verse regard,
Employ the famous Tyneside Bard;
And he in words of Truthful grace
Will give your trades and callings place.
His scale of charges you may know
By application, as below.

The Robsons lived at 23 Tyne Street, off Railway Street in Sunderland, [57] some distance from the Corvans.

On 16 January 1862 the pumping engine beam at Hartley Colliery in Northumberland broke. Part of it blocked the single shaft and 204 boys and men died because there was no other means of escape.[58] On the 22nd the queen enquired about the chances of rescue and the viewer replied that hope was not yet extinguished. Soon after he told her that all hope was gone and she sent a telegramme of condolence, then a letter. The mass funeral took place on the 26th.



59

The inquest jury expressed their 'strong opinion of the imperative necessity that all working collieries should have at least a second shaft or outlet' so as to 'afford the workmen the means of escape should any obstruction take place',[60] but there was little hope of legislation from a completely pro-capitalist parliament, and even 'Radical' MPs opposed trade unions.

John Arthur Roebuck was born in India in 1802, and raised in Canada, but moved to England in 1824. He became a Radical MP for Bath and then a Sheffield MP in 1849, but by the early 1860s, during the US civil war, he supported the slave owners. He also alleged that British working men were spendthrifts and wife-beaters and opposed trade unions.[61]

Irish sentiments had appeared in newspapers all over the country for decades.[62] The original lyrics of *No Irish Need Apply* were about an Irish-born maidservant failing to find work in London, and the song crossed the Atlantic, where Tony Pastor sang John F. Poole's lyrics, which struck a chord with emigrant Irish workers.[63] In England Corvan set *The Queen Has Sent A Letter, Or, The Hartley Calamity*, to same tune.

Oh! bless the Queen of England, who sympathy doth show
Towards our stricken widows amid their grief and woe,
Old England never had her like, nor ever will again;
Then bless good Queen Victoria, ye loyal hearted men.
She sent a letter stating—"I share your sorrow here,"
To soothe the aching hearts of all and dry the widow's tear.

Above two hundred miners are numbered with the dead
Whose wives and children ne'er should want their bit of daily bread.
And while death's shadow overhangs the miner's cot with gloom,
Let us calm the widow's heaving breast for those laid in the tomb;
And ye that round your glowing fires, life's comforts daily share,
Think of the helpless orphans and widows in despair.

We have heroes from the Redan and Inkerman as well
Whose deeds of daring on the field a nation's thanks can tell;
But did they face the deadly styth, where scarce a single breath
Held life to face eternity to recue life or death!
Show me the page in history where deeds heroic shine
More bright than our Northumbrian men, the heroes of the mine.

The collier's welfare, as he toils, more interest might command
Among the wealthy owners and rulers of the land.
Are they like beasts of burthen, as Roebuck once did rave,
Will government in future strive the collier's life to save?
Why should the worn-out collier amid his object gloom
Eke out the life his maker spared to share the pauper's doom?

God speed the hardy collier, and Coulson's gallant band,
Who braved the perils of the shaft with willing heart and hand,
And ye that add to store the hive and feed the fatherless,
May He that watches o'er all things, your earthly prospects bless.
The weeping and the wailing of widows let us end,
And with our Queen let all men see we are the widow's friend.

The sailors on the stormy sea life's perils often share;
Our soldiers 'mid the battle's strife, what man can do they dare,
Yet both have got a chance for life, but all the miners doom,
'Twas sad 'to sleep the sleep of death closed in the living tomb;

Then man to man with heart and hand, let us still help each other,
With generous impulse to relieve a sister or a brother.

Oh! gather round, ye generous band, whose bounty caused a smile
To 'llume the face of dark despair throughout old England's Isle;
Ye have ta'en the gloom from sorrow where rays of love will fall
On the widow and and the fatherless, who pray "God bless you all!"
or the Queen has sent a letter, tho' she mourns a husband dear,
soothe the aching hearts of all and dry the widow's tear.

The lyrics were not printed until later that year,[64] but Corvan's song was to become a 'favourite, not only in Newcastle, but all over the pit districts of Durham and Northumberland'.[65]

Late in January the *Newcastle Guardian* reported on a 'nigger's ball' at the Tyne and 'many of the droll sayings are apropos to the droll doings of some of our neighbours'. It was 'well plotted' and 'creates bursts of laughter in every part of the house', while the songs and other amusements were 'well selected'.[66] *The Era* noted that Balmbra had engaged a 'Negro vocalist and dancer' and 'Mr Corvan', the 'renowned local singer and poet', had sung 'several excellent songs on the principal topics of the day, which are nightly received with unbounded applause'. Early in February, when George Ridley was one of the 'established favourites' at the Tyne,[67] the company donated £21, their day's wages, to the Hartley Fund. The *Newcastle Courant* reported that £5, the 'Proceeds of an Entertainment at Mr John Balmbra's Music Saloon', had also been donated.

Newcastle Corporation owned land on the Quayside where buildings had burned down in 1854. Late in 1857 a public meeting approved Ralph Walters' offer of £39,000 for the land, and the Corporation agreed in spring 1858, but did nothing.[68] Early in 1862 Corvan reused the tune of *Jeanette and Jeanotte* for *Work for 1,000 Men* and denounced the 'Corporation clique'.

Work for one thoosand men, O what a welcome soond,
If the news was nobbit true, my lads, wi' joy each heart wad boon'd,
Work for a thoosand men, the Ratepayers tell us plain,
Wor canny kee wants beeldin' up, sae lang in ruins lain.
Day efter day, wor workin' men, keen poverty endure,
They're oft compell'd to call upon th' Guardians for the Poor.

Chorus.

But when poverty besets us, employ us ye who can,
For want should niver be the lot of an honest workin' man.

Work for one thoosand men, aw wish the time was nigh,
We're tir'd iv stannin' in the streets, star'd at by the passers by,
Work for one thousand men, ye wealthy men be quick,

Let *Walters* hae the *sites*, in spite of Corporation clique.
Put doon faction in wor Coonsil, obstructions then mon flee,
An' honest hands earn honest bread, noo plung'd in poverty.

Cho

Work for one thoosand men! we need it ye'll believe
When ye see us stannin' i' the streets half starv'd frae morn te eve;
Wor wives an' families te support, wor case is sad indeed;
Its hard for working men to hear their bairns cry oot for bread.

Think of strong men oot of work, wives destitute and pale,
An' cry shyem upon the busy few that such misery's entail.

Chorus.

Work for one thoosand men! improvements will be made;
Wi' reet men in reet places we'll hae nae stop to trade.
Work for one thoosand men! 'twad banish care and grief,
For we subsist but varry poor upon the poor out-door relief.
Then strain a nerve to help us, ye men that hez the reins,
Think more of poor humanity and less of petty gains.

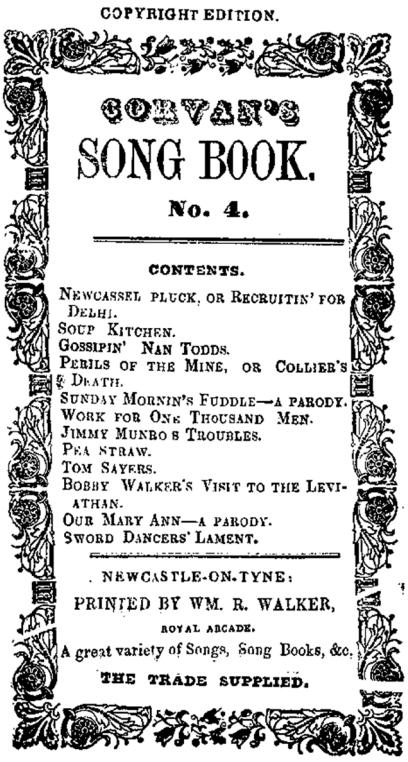
Chorus.

Work for one thoosand men! O would that we could prize
What we stand so much in need of, then happy days would rise.
Work for one thoosand men makes work for thoosands more,
Who hand in hand with poverty keep moving to the door.

Then let us pray for better times, wi' labour full in store,
With a fair day's wage for fair day's work, we'll ask for nothing more. Chorus. [69]

Early in February the Corporation gave Walters the deeds to the land.[70] *The Era* noted that Corvan, the 'popular local singer and author', was at Balmbra's, and 'always has something new to amuse the "British"'. He was 'as great a favourite as ever' and his violin solos were 'nightly encored'.[71] Stanley announced an 'Entire Change of Company' and 'Great Novelties' at the Tyne,[72] and Ridley donated another 10s to the Hartley Fund.[73]

A year earlier William Reay Walker, the 'Stationery & Printing master', and his family lived in Albert Street, All Saints, along with a Customs Officer and his family. Walker employed one man, three boys and a girl at his printing shop in the Royal Arcade and he was also a wholesaler. Probably in early 1862 he printed *Corvan's Song Book No. 4.* It was almost identical to the three published by Stewart five years earlier, but Walker was now the publisher. After his successful engagement at the Wheat Sheaf Corvan may well have been confident of getting more bookings, and this songbook would supplement his income.



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CORVAN'S

SONG BOOK.

No. 4.

CONTENTS.

NEWCASSEL PLUCK, OR RECRUITIN' FOR DELHI.
SOUP KITCHEN.
GOSSIPIN' NAN TODDS.
PERILS OF THE MINE, OR COLLIER'S DEATH.
SUNDAY MORNIN'S FUDDLE—A PARODY.
WORK FOR ONE THOUSAND MEN.
JIMMY MUNRO'S TROUBLES.
PEA STRAW.
TOM SAYERS.
BOBBY WALKER'S VISIT TO THE LEVIATHAN.
OUR MARY ANN—A PARODY.
SWORD DANCERS' LAMENT.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE:

PRINTED BY WM. R. WALKER,

ROYAL ARCADE.

A great variety of Songs, Song Books, &c.

THE TRADE SUPPLIED.

Perils of the Mine had been published in 1854, *Bobby Walker's Visit* and *Newcassel Pluck* had been in print by 1857, and *Tom Sayers* by 1860, but *Jimmy Munro's Troubles*, *Soup Kitchen* and *Work for 1,000 Men* were more recent.

Gossipin' Nan Todds used the tune of *We're a' Noddin* which was associated with Burns' *Gudeen to you kimmer*. Corvan's female narrator gossiped about women who took their husband's coat to the pawnbroker on Mondays, smoked cigars with 'gentlemen' or lay 'mortal drunk' in the gutter. The fiddler with spectacles was probably Mr Sanders and he and the pianist with a corset were in Balmbra's orchestra, while Bob Sessford was a waiter

Aw' a body that hates gossipin', gos, gos, gossipin',
For wives they will keep gossipin' in country an' in town,
In ivery street, in ivery lane, ivery terrace, ivery square,
Interfeerin' wi' others business, begum ye'll find wives there,
Clish, Clashin' aboot neiboors wi' their knittin' there they stand,
Making mighty ivery little fault, that chance may bring to hand. CHORUS.

For its all gossip, gos, gos, gossipin' in country, &c.

Noo there' Mr. what's-his-nyem courtin' Hannah Sigh-a-way,
They say he's got a ticket o' leave from government,
Nan Wilson's good man's cousin Jin, she says its nobbit stuff,
For the man's just been in gaol two years, that's nought, he's reet eneuff,
His mother tee, poor body, she tried sair to mend his ways,
But then she's newt particular, when she fynds him meat an' claithes.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

There's the Murphy's an' the Broons, the Jenkins' wi' the Jones' and Greens,
Frae morn till neet thor drinkin' an' fighting 'mang thor-sells,
Noo the Murphy's an' the Broon's they live on one stair-heed,
An' they say Broon broke Murphy's nose, causin' mis-chief sad indeed,
So the Murphy's they all fired away, then Jones and Green did froon,
An' interfeer'd as neiboors will, an' duen the Murphy's broon.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

Even me they scandalize, awltho' aw niver teyste a drop,
Nan Winter swore she saw me drunk alang wi' Tommy Summers,
But aw ken her tricks wi' skipper Dick, thro' the key-hole aw did keek,
Iv' a room aw catched them making love, so aw think aw've room to speak,
But's that's a thing aw niver de, expose my neiboors tricks,
But if aw let the Bobby oot aw'll hev' her in a fix.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

Noo there's Mr. Thing-em-bob, they say he's quite a lady's man,
Keepin' two or three upon the sly, but sich things aw niver mind,
An' there's Mistress White a canny body, but her husband disent knaw it,
That ivery Monday morning his uncle gets his coat,
Nor does Mrs. White ken what aw ken, but its not maw place to speek,
But they de say for some fyeulish trick, White pays half-a-crown a-week.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

There's Bessy Stobbs, in Clayton Street, but its just the neiboors tallkin',
She smokes cigars in crinoline wi' gents', cryin' all serene,
An' Miss Molly Bruce, sae modest tee, awltho' aw didn't see it,
Was mortal drunk an' lying 'mang the gutters i' the street,
An' that S—d—rs the fiddle player, but its just what people says,
Said one neet if he wore spectacles, the piano-player wore stays.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

Ye seldom hear me speak aboot waiters in a company,
Alltho' there's awd Bob Sessford kens Ned Corvan bez the lines,
Noo aw once heard Bill the brewer say Sessford wasn't sharp eneuff
For waiting, but it strikes me Bob, they'll find ye up to snuff.
An' they say waiters nibble change, as weel as nibble drink,
Hoo such fuilish lees can spread aboot, goodness gracious Who wad think.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

Aw wonder hoo the women can spend their precious time away,
Meddlin wi' thor neiboors faults, its a thing aw niver do,
Aw'm an enemy to gossiping, ye all may plainly see,
So bring yor wives an' sweethearts to get advice frae me,
May scowldin' wives an' lang-tongued wives obey thor marriage laws,
Then we'll hev an end to gossiping, and ne end tiv applauuse.

CHORUS—For its all gossip, &c.

Wives who failed to 'obey thor marriage laws' and restrictive licensing laws were becoming something of a fixation with Corvan.

For *The Sunday Morning Fuddle* Corvan used the tune of *Before the Bells do Ring*, which was also known as *Twas on a Sunday Morning*. His narrator entered a pub which served spirits illegally before the Church service ended, got drunk, started to sing, was slung out, continued singing, and was subsequently summonsed, fined 10s and cautioned not to repeat the offence.

'Twas on a Sunday mornin', before the bells did peal,
Intiv a public hoose sae sly thv the back-door aw did steal,
Suen a gill or two aw guzzled up, then doon my brass did fling,
It was on a Sunday mornin', before the bells did ring.

Aw cool'd maw coppers awl serene, an' then begun to jog,
When aw thought aw might as weel just hev a glass or two of grog,
So aw fuddled there till aw got kick'd oot, because aw begun to sing,
It was on a Sunday morning, before the bells did ring.

Wi' the scraper for my pillow, unconscious there aw lay,
Until two kind policemen gently bore my nabs away;
They wak'd me up sayin' come along, but maw neeves aw suen let swing,
An' aw floor'd the two fat bobby's before the bells did ring.

Then off aw cut down Pandon, wi' the Bobby's at my tail,
Like wolves aw heard them breathin' their prey secure to nail,
Tho' aw ran sae fast, aw was pinn'd at last, so then aw thought aw'd sing,
It was on a Sunday mornin' before the bells did ring.

Then thro' the streets they dragg'd me full o' bitter beer an' woe,
But being kind o' troublesome, for a shutten they did go,
Then aw made the bobbies carry me all the way while aw did sing,
It was on a Sunday morning before the bells did ring.

To the station-hoose we gat at last, then they in wi' me did pop,
There they awore maw noise an' singin' in the street they couldn't stop,
The charge was made, aw was charged ten bob, with a caution not to sing,
Upon a Sunday morning before the bells do ring.

MORIAL.

Take warning, now, ye lushingtons, that likes a coolin' drain
On a Sunday morning, bear in mind, the Monday Mornings pain,
Drop lushin' when you feel inclined to fight, to dance, or sing,
'Twas on a Sunday morning before the bells did ring. 74

The fight took place where Corvan lived as boy and the song suggests that his battle with authority had been going on for years.

The *Pea Straw* tune had been associated with lyrics about courting and sex for over a century,[75] and Richard Thornton had played it at South Shields dances when he was a young man.

> It was a common practice to have a dance once weekly in connection with every shipyard in the town, and a grand ball at Christmas. In this way I was much in demand, and at 4s a night I was booked up fully.
>
> Of course everyone looked forward to the grand ball at Christmas and no end of time was spent on the decorations which consisted of paper roses, streamers of coloured paper and roses, with an elevated orchestra for your humble [servant].
>
> Oh, but those were happy days and with no end of smiles for the youthful fiddler.
>
> Half-way down the programme SUPPER stood out in bold type, and I can remember that to me it was the titbit of the evening.
>
> Supper over, a circle was formed and the pea-straw or pillow dance was introduced. This game gave the couples the opportunity of proving their preference for each other as it included a kiss'.[76]

The narrator of Corvan's *The Pea Straw* loved to dance and knew the clog dancers Fletcher, Geordie Tate and Frankie Pringle from Felling, and the musicians Geordie Nickleson, 'Scaify', Bobby Spoors, Bobby Stephenson, MacDougal and 'Geordie S--n'.

Aw's Nan Bell frae Ouseburn, the pet iv a' the men,
There's not a dancer i' the toon, nor fiddler but aw ken;
There's canny Geordie Nickleson, an' Scaify wiv his bass,
Bobby Sp—rs and Bobby S—ph—n they niver let me pass.

CHORUS.

For it's weel knawn roond the room aw dance the best of a',
(Singing)—The best bed's a feather bed myed o pea straw.
The flute players they're nuts on me, an' swear there's nyen like Nan;
Anty J—hs—n and McD—g—l follow me wi Geordie S—n.
But the rum 'uns is the dancer lads, they yen sae late;
Fletcher wiv his clogs brings squads alang wi' Geordie Tate.

Chorus.

The last ball aw danced at was a raffle at the Fellin',
And the fun and spree we had there ye'd laugh to hear the tellin';
Aw danc'd wi' Franky Pringle there, who shiffled on the floor—
Awd folk an' young folk he lick'd them by the score.

Chorus.

Some lasses like the fitter lads, because they're clean and neat,
And some like the joiner lads, wi' shovins amang their feet;
But aw like the sailor lads, they've won my best regads,
Because they splice the main brace and square the main yard.

Chorus. 77

The implicit reference to sailors' sexual prowess reinforces the idea that Corvan suffered from anxiety, as does another song.

The lyrics of *Fare You Well, My Mary Ann* had been published by Daniel Bowman in Newcastle,[78] and Corvan used its tune for *Our Mary Ann, a Parody on My Mary Ann*.

Let poets praise our beauteous Queens,
And say they're a blessing to man;
But I've caught a tartar, you know who I means,
She once had a sailor, now she's My Mary Ann.

CHORUS.

Believe what I tell of My Mary Ann,
Although it may cause you to smile;
I must do what I'm bid 'cause she wops me like a kid,
And the cheps cry out, Billy, how's Our Mary Ann.

She swears like a sailor, and grins like a Turk,
Although I does what I can,
Yet she boldly asserts I'm not fit for my work—
She's been used with sailor's rations has Our Mary Ann.

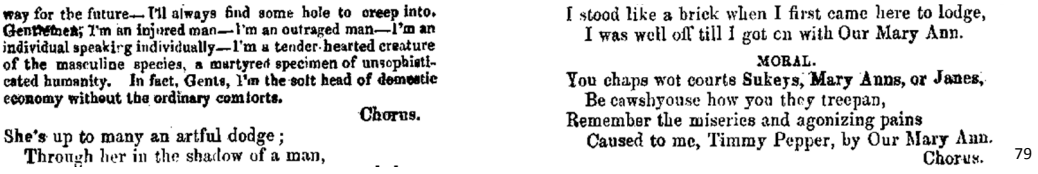
Chorus.

I wish her sailor had never been drowned,
But come back from sea like a man,
For ever since then she goes bobbin' around,
Getting me in debt, does Our Mary Ann.

Chorus.

She spouts my togs to raise tobacco, tea, and gin,
Begs, borrows, and steals where she can;
She'd pawned this coat to-day, but they wouldn't take it in,
So taken in for once was Our Mary Ann:

SPOKEN.—Yes, I believe you, my boy. She was taken in, and wasn't I so glad, 'cause, you know, I must have something to appear decent in. Ah! he must be a happy man who possesses a good wife. Mine's good enough to look at; she's only eighteen stone, a semi-demi sea devil, everlasting heaving out signals of distress. I'm her last victim—the infatuated remnant and now joint-stock of a sailor's leavings. O! that her too solid flesh would melt, that the bone of my bone and the sailor's former good understanding would freeze and resolve itself into a sentry-box! But my passion is rising. I'm determined I won't stand it any longer. I'll wallop her; I'll give her a broadside; and she'll perhaps give me six months. Let me see. I'll rush forth upon the world—I'll stand out of her



way for the future—I'll always find some hole to creep into. Gentlemen, I'm an injured man—I'm an outraged man—I'm an individual speaking individually—I'm a tender-hearted creature of the masculine species, a martyred specimen of unsophisticated humanity. In fact, Gents, I'm the soft head of domestic economy without the ordinary comforts.

Chorus.

She's up to many an artful dodge;
Through her in the shadow of a man,
I stood like a brick when I first came here to lodge,
I was well off till I got on with Our Mary Ann.

MORAL.

You chaps wot courts Sukeys, Mary Anns, or Janes,
Be cawshyouse how you they treepan,
Remember the miseries and agonizing pains
Caused to me, Timmy Pepper, by Our Mary Ann.

Chorus. 79

Mary Ann was the name of the Corvan's younger daughter. Was Isabella depriving her husband of the 'ordinary comforts'?

Early in March *The Era* reported that 'Mr Edward Corvan, the popular author and vocalist', had painted back-drops which represented the Hartley 'catastrophe' for the final *tableaux*' of his benefit at Balmbra's. The company, and artistes from elsewhere, performed and 'the house was a bumper'. The Tyne's 'Drawing-room Entertainment' bore 'a very close resemblance to a dramatic performance',[80] and after Stanley engaged the 'Tyneside vocalist', 'Elfin' reported in the *Chronicle*.

> Notwithstanding the dull times the audiences at the Tyne Concert Hall keep excellent. It has now become an established and one of the best frequented places of amusement in the town. Mr Stanley manages admirably in always having a weekly change of some or other of his performers, and in securing the best talent that could be got in the profession. With such a spirited management and such moderate prices the 'Tyne' will, no doubt, long maintain its well deserved popularity.

'My old facetious friend Ned Corvan (who, I am glad to say, has ceased his devotions at the shrine of Bacchus)' - stopped binge drinking - was 'retrieving his deserved reputation in the estimation of Newcastle audiences' by his 'great ability' and 'a flow of humour, the genuineness of which is attested by his spontaneity'. His 'Tyneside songs' were 'applauded to the echo' and this 'really talented vocalist wisely eschews that breadth of expression which formerly detracted from his merits'. He gave his 'celebrated Illustration of "Billy Purvis, stealing the Bundle", wearing the showman's 'veritable dress', and could 'imitate his poor old master to "a tee"', so this would attract 'numbers of all ages and both sexes to witness the performance'.[81] Reportedly Corvan drew Purvis's face on a blackboard with a running commentary. 'That's his heed, canny aud fellow! That's his mooth; mony a three-happorth's gyen doon there'.[82] Once, when 'all was still, someone shouted out, "Myek us a cuddy, Ned"'. '"All reet"', replied Ned, without a moment's hesitation, "stand up," and he turned as he spoke' to where the voice came from, but 'the cuddy brayed no more'.[83] *The Era* noted that the 'local' singer had another week at Balmbra's and was one of its 'great "cards"'.[84]

The magistrates refused Stanley a licence again,[85] but he re-engaged Corvan, and *The Era* reported that he 'met with a most hearty reception'.[86] 'Elfin' noted that he gave 'no end of amusement to the *habitués* of this popular place of resort' and elicited 'roars of laughter'. His sketch brought 'remembrance of many pleasant events in our childhood' to those who 'remembered the original', who did not include 'Elfin', since the 'resuscitation of the peculiarities of the motley Billy was almost startling'.

> What a fund of native genuine wit there is in the man to be sure! And what a pity it is he has heretofore made so little use of it! If he had cultivated his abilities, and enrolled himself years ago in the 'Coldstream Guards', [teetotallers] he would have held a position in his profession vastly superior to Cowell or any of his compeers. Drink, accursed drink, has been poor Ned's weakness. I'm glad to hear, however, that he has now thrown away 'the bottle and the glass' and resolved to give his abilities a fair chance in the world. May he be strong enough to stick to his resolution! I … found him before an excellent audience, whom at one time he convulsed with laughter, and at another moved to absolute silence by some soft tune on his violin. He could not have been less than forty minutes upon the stage, and never during the whole of that time did he allow the interest and attention of the audience to pall for a single minute.

Stanley advertised 'The Tyneside Humorist in Two Original Songs', and the 'comic effusions' of 'Messrs Corvan and Spiers' were 'highly successful'.[87] In April a paper reported that 'Whae Stole the Bundle' was 'a source of great amusement' and 'Mr. Corvan is an inimitable "Billy", whose costume he wears'.[88] The *Newcastle Daily Journal* lamented the decline of the Easter Hopping.

> Where are now the long streets of booths, the armies of gingerbread stalls, the hosts of 'shuggy shows,' which were wont to delight young and old in the days the late Billy Purvis of jovial memory? The ground where once they stood has been appropriated by a hard-hearted Corporation to the prosaic purpose of a Cattle Market; and they themselves are now only represented by a few broken-down shows, evidently drawing near their latter end, and a dismally small array of spice-stalls and cranky swings. The presence yesterday of Swallow's circus only seemed add to the melancholy of the display, for it could not but bring to mind the glories of former days, whilst it did not resuscitate them. But though we may fairly consider it to be *in extremis*, the hopping is not dead yet. It still affords enjoyment to innumerable servant girls and children; and last night the crowd that assembled round it was nearly as great as in former years. [89]

The *Guardian* reported the 'Special provision' at the Tyne,[90] but Corvan accepted a one-off engagement at a 'grand concert' in Burradon in Northumberland along with Miss Boutland and Messrs Stephenson and M'Dougall, whose violin and the flute solos were 'greatly applauded'.[91] *The Era* noted that Corvan, the 'Favourite Tyneside poet and singer', was back at the Tyne,[92] but the *Guardian* tried to link the hall to the sudden death of a 57-year-old woman by quoting an inquest witness who testified that she 'sometimes took too much drink'. She 'thought she had only two glasses of bitter beer' on the day of her death, though she 'had been at the Tyne Concert Hall that night'.[93] An omnibus now ran from Balmbra's Wheat Sheaf to his Berry Edge Theatre Royal in Consett.[94]

Possibly around this time Corvan had a benefit at the Blue Bell Inn in Cramlington, which was reportedly a 'favourite resort' of his, and he was 'a great success', but during the night a notorious local character called 'Turpin' stole his money. Turpin

'willingly submitted to having his pockets searched, in which nothing was found. An accidental tap on the hip, however, revealed the presence of the whole of this money concealed in what in those days was then unknown, a hip pocket'.[95]

The Original African Opera Troupe had raised money for Newcastle Infirmary and the *Chronicle* preferred them to 'spurious blackamoors', while the Female Christy Minstrels were '7 young ladies of the coloured opera troupe' who told political jokes and praised Garibaldi. The *Chronicle* supported the anti-slavery cause and noted that the Dwight Family from Maryland, who 'held a very high place in the profession', were at the Tyne, and in May the Cedar Family, the 'celebrated negro vocalists and dancers', were a 'great hit' there.[96]

In June Corvan played 'Geordie the Keelman' in the Tyne's 'Christy Entertainment of the Nigger Ball' and the *Chronicle* reported that he 'materially increased the effect of this ludicrous production' with 'Tyneside songs and comicalities', 'illustrating recent events of local interest', which 'elicited the hearty laughter of the holiday folks'. *Thespian Rows* was 'a hit at the recent *emeute*' (row) between the Theatre Royal manager and the leading lady. (It and *The Tyneside Men* have not been traced.)[97] The *Guardian* acknowledged that the Tyne was 'extensively patronized', the company was 'very efficient' and the lessee 'spares neither expense nor trouble to keep his establishment metropolitan singing saloons, while the Newcastle favourite, "Ned Corvan," keeps the house in roars of laughter with his local wit' and the '"niggers" faithfully delineate the character and habits of the black population of America'.[98] *The Era* reported that the 'Tyneside vocalist and author' had 'met with a hearty reception',[99] and the *Chronicle* understood that the 'first class performers' were 'in treaty with the proprietor of one of the principal concert halls of the Metropolis for an engagement during the period of the Industrial Exhibition'.[100] Corvan was evidently not engaged in the capital, but he was respected and admired in Newcastle.

John Atlantic Stephenson's father had worked for the East India Company as a chemist, and John got his middle name because he was born off the coast of Africa in 1829, on the way to India. He later ran Sowerby Glass Works in Gateshead,[101] and recalled the patter for what he knew as *Heh ye seen wor Jimmy*,[102] for which Corvan dressed as an old female hawker.[103]

> Oh hinnies, what iver is aw gannin to de with that lad o mine? his gawn to have maw life – I'se sure he is. It's wor Jimmy aw mean - ha ye seen owt on him? he's an awful lad - Wark! he'll work neyn. he's been gannin Out every day for the last Six Months te seek a job, + niver getten one yet – not likely – while I keeps him - he knaws better, hinney. - Now, his Father was a Man, his Father was - If ye had only seen his Father Cummin alang the Quayside if a Sunday Mornin wiv his white hat + his wooden leg + a blue hankitcher round his neck - he was the vary spittin immage o' the Duke o' Wellington, – Umph-m, About the small o' the back, hinny. Oh dear me, when Aw think of his Father it reminds me o' wor early days - when he used te cum sweetheartin me - in the Spring-time o' the Year - when the Cock Robbin + the + the [*sic*] Kitty Wren and the Moudy Warp [mole] all joined together iv a grand chorus o' delight – Umph-m, it was lovely - he used to take me to Jesmond - down by the green water pool - him walkin on in front and me behind + I didn't like that, ye knaw + I wad say, 'Give ower letting me abe', + then he put his airm round ma waist + Oh, such things he wad say tiv us, - he once said at aw was vary like Mary Queen o' Scots – Umph-m About the back o' the neck, hinney! but he's dead + geyn now, hinney - + these luvely times is ower - but I've still getten his wooden leg hinging aback o' the door as a mementer of the dear departed, Things is Changed now hinney - I ha te gan out washing five days a week, eighteenpence a day an' me Meat, little enough Aw think - If it wasent for a little drop o gin Aw get we a little drop of Water – not too much water ye knaw for it niver did agree with me – aw divent knaw what aw wad de - Well, hinney Whe de ye think aw seed the uther day - Aw was Cummin doon the groat market + aw just popped into H[el]l's kitchen, Aw beg yor pardin, hinney, but ye knaw where aw mean, where they keep the poker chined up for fear they knock one another on the heed wiv it ye knaw + Aw'd just getting a half o' gin when whe should come in but Hillar Thompson – Geordy Thompson, ye knaw, but they call him Hillar - he was brother to Billy Thompson – ye knawed Billy – they byeth used to be wi' Billy Purvis, ye knaw - Hillar's just aboot the height o six pennorth of Copper ye knaw + always drunk – Aw believe he was born drunk. Aw niver saw him sober i' ma life - he just gans aboot spoutin' for beer – Spungin ye knaw - so when he came in a Chep says 'lets hev a recitation, Hillar' Why, thats what just what he cum in for - de ye see? - So he gets on the table + starts 'A Chieftain to the highlands bound', - + then he stopped. 'Aw knaw what he wants' Says the Chep – 'fetch him a quart o' Beer, Misses' - + she did and Hillar slackened it off hinney, Aye, te the last grasp - then he started off afresh. 'A Chieftain to the highlands bound, Cried, boatman do not tarry, an' I'll give thee a silver pound' – him give Onybody a Silver Pund, he niver gov Onybody a Copper fardin iv his life – niver! – 'To row me o'er the ferry. - Oh Who is this wad cross loch gyle – this dark, this stormy Water? Oh, I am the Chief of Ulva's Isle, – Him the Chief of Ulva's Isle! Why, his Father and Muther selled apples + pears iv denton chare – 'And this Lord Ullin's daughter. And fast before her Father's Men, We two have fled together; Oh, should they meet us in the glen, My blood would stain the heather'. - His blood stain the heather! Why, his blood was nowt but beer! - + just then ye knaw, he stepped back on the table - te give a bit elocution tiv his words – de ye see? when he went Right Ower intiv a basket of eggs + biscuits belanging tiv an Aud Wife + myed a bonny smash. 'Whe's gawn te pay for these?' says the wife. 'Had yor gob' says Hillar; 'I'll eat them all when we're dune'. [104]

Another member of Corvan's audience recalled that though his 'broad vernacular would scarcely bear quotation', his 'manner was rough and the lines would scarcely scan', the 'vividness in the description' in 'the style of the "Deeth o' Nelson"' was 'the delight of music halls and public houses'.[105] Another agreed that his audiences 'never tired' of it. One evening Thomas Sayers, the landlord of the Blue Bell, was 'convulsed' with laughter at Corvan's 'humour and drollery as the distressed mother' and 'gasped out', 'Ned for God's sake, drop; aw's killin' me-sel'. 'Stopping his song and putting on a half-alarmed look, Ned came to the front. "Ye munnit de that', he said, 'or they'll heh me up for *Tommycide*"'. Another evening he was the 'last turn', but

> kept delighting his audience so long, that those who were behind the scenes waiting to be done for the night whispered from the side wings, 'Ned, if ye'll finish, you shall have what you like at the Durham Ox over the way'. 'What's that aw hear?' says Ned, stopping his song suddenly, and making his way to the front of the stage. Where, taking off his tattered bonnet and looking at his audience, he said, 'Ye'll excuse the parental feelings of a poor mother, but aw've just got word the laddie's been fund; he's ower at the Durham Ox. Gud neet'. And so at once the performance finished.[106]

Corvan sang his 'Tyneside Sensation Songs' until the Tyne closed for the summer, early in July.[107]

Stanley applied again for a theatrical licence, but the magistrates 'did not see that there was any new feature in the application' and 'did not feel justified in granting it'.[108] 'Elfin' advised Stanley to 'take the law into his own hands';[109] but he replaced parts of the wooden structure with 'more substantial erections of brick and wood',[110] and advertised for 'an ENTIRE COMPANY', including musicians who played 'Cornet, Flute and Double Bass'.[111] Late in August the Tyne reopened with the Alabama Minstrels, the '*only Troupe* of Real Blacks in England', and the *Chronicle* affirmed that they were 'certainly not excelled by any of the pseudo-professors'.[112] Stanley re-engaged them and had 'Vacancies for First-class talent only'. In October *The Era* noted that the Tyne's 'unique and amusing Negro Entertainments' competed with the Christy Minstrels, the 'popular Troupe of negro Melodists' at the New Town Hall, and with 'Mr. Corvan (local singer and author)', at the Victoria,[113] but he was now the last of the three brothers.

The *Usworth* (or *Unsworth*), a 319 ton sailing vessel registered in South Shields, had been wrecked in February, and Matthew Corvin drowned, but his £16 5s 2d wages were not handed over to his family until October.[114] Soon after John Sessford cut his throat with a razor. A police surgeon dressed his wound and policemen took him to the Infirmary. The *Newcastle Journal* reported that it was 'a deep and severe cut, and a number of the small vessels are divided; but the more important vessels have escaped, and it is possible that he may recover. The cause of this rashness is said to be connected with his domestic affairs'. A day or two later he was able to read the newspapers, but then he died,[115] and the inquest jury's verdict was 'temporary insanity'.[116] In November Emilie Stanley, George's wife, died at home in 18 Ashfield East Terrace.[117]

The Era reported that the Newcastle Volunteers' Band 'played a selection of popular operatic airs' and 'talented *artistes*' performed at Corvan's benefit at the Victoria, and a week later 'Mr E. Corvan' had 'taken up his quarters' at Balmbra's 'after an absence of some months'. In December he was among those who 'maintain their *prestige* as *artistes* of the first class', while the vacancy caused by Sessford's death, after 16 years in the orchestra, had been 'most ably filled' by Frederic Lonza.[118]

The blockade of the USA's Atlantic ports had reduced Tyne exports and limited local workers' ability to earn enough money to attend concert halls, which regularly engaged national and international performers, but when the Original African Opera Troupe returned to Newcastle they sang excerpts from Italian opera.[119]

Possibly around this time Corvan wrote a poem about one of his daughters and used the old-fashioned 'long s'.

The snow's like a shroud of silvery light
O'er a Sleeping Angel 'lumes the ~~earth~~ night
The Countlefs Stars in heaven may dwell
But the light from thine eyes all else excell
Fairy Joys [?] in the Morn beams dance
But their lustre dims in thy Maiden Glance

Thou'st Summer to me when the drifting Snow
Chills the Wanderer here below
Spring in thy Youthfull blush I see
Sweet daisy clad in Modesty
Born to be loved by honest worth
Fairest flowers of Mother earth. [120]

Sword dancing was a source of income for underemployed and unemployed men, and Corvan had formerly engaged some at his South Shields hall.[121] He set *The Sword Dancer's Lament* to *The Christmas Lilt; or, Callin' In*, and his narrator was a dancer.[122]

Come pity us collier blades, let your bosoms heave a sigh,
For like the myest o' trades wor good days hez gyen by;
Nae sprees on pay weeks noo, nae fuddlin' i' the toon,
To keep wor spirits up, ivery day fast sinkin' doon.
CHORUS.—Fal lal the dal lal lay, &c.

Aw mind the time, my lads, aw had kelter in galore,
Eight raws o' buttons on my jacket shone, wi' claes an' gear in store,
But noo aw's fairly fleeced, maw keyvil's oot at last,
Aw's the blunted pick o' former times, the ghost o' good days past.
Fal lal the dal, &c.

Nae sportin' news for me, although aw've been a pet;
Amang the nobs aw nailed the tip, an' coller'd mony a bet;
At boolin' match or race they cried for Geordy Dodds,
A referee they wad hae me, then aw tueky'd odds for odds.
Fal lal the dal, &c.

Greyhounds and terriers then, maw marrows all agreed,
Aw turn'd them oot forstrate, weel bred an' best o' speed.
Aw myed money then like dort, aye, an' myed my money flee.

But noo there's nowther sport, my lads, strang beer, nor brass for me.
Fal lal the dal, &c.

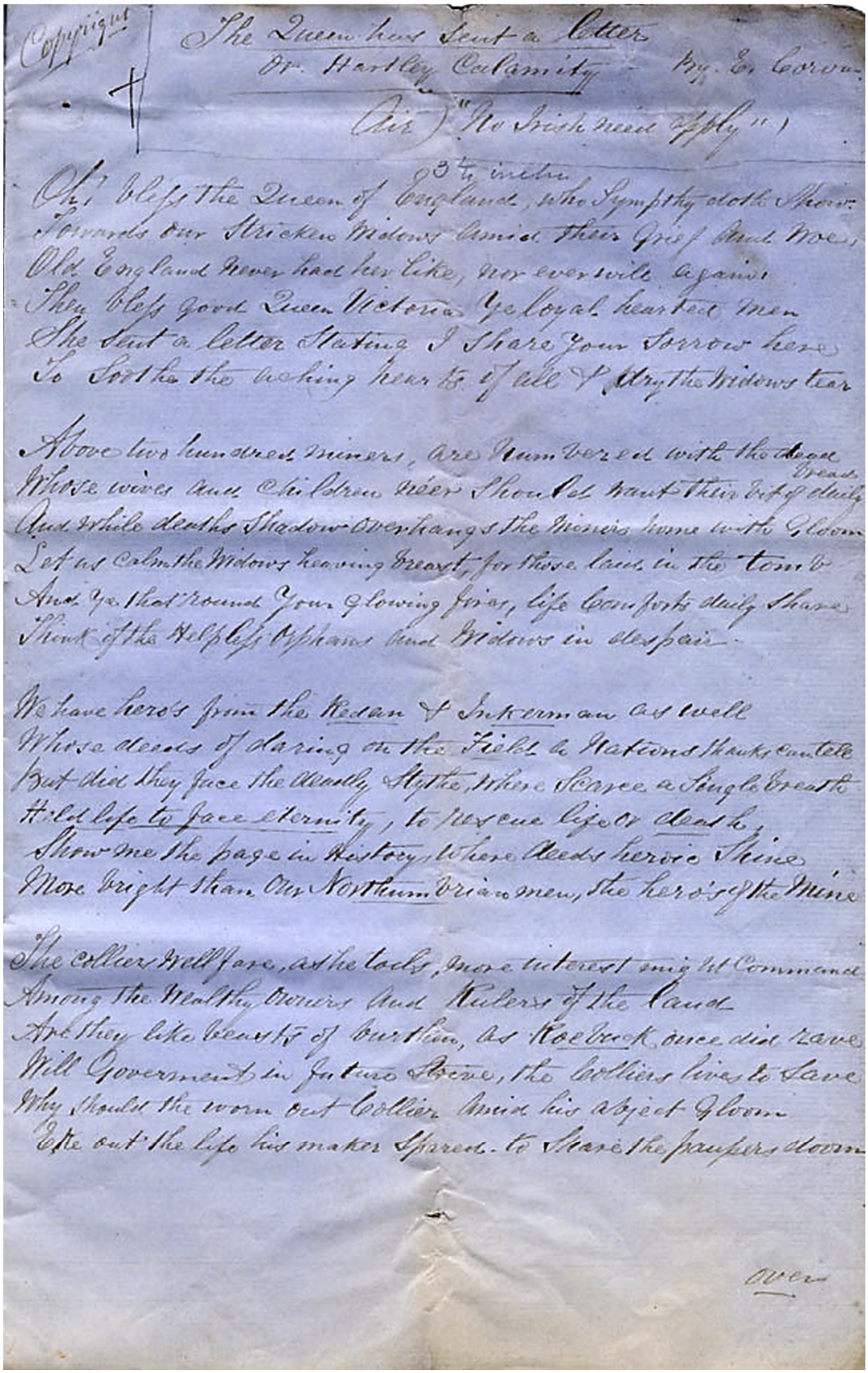
Aw was fond o' fiddlers then, lads; aw've chiuk'd doon on the tray
A shillin' or two for colliers then—could weel afford to pay;
Wi' lasses i' the reels aw'd cut an' shuffle feet,
We danced an' sang wi' happy hearts till mornin' chased oot neet.
Fal lal the dal, &c.

Them days seem like a dream, sae fast they've fled away;
Noo people's gettin' wiser an' poorer ivery day;
If that's the worth o' knowledge ye rich 'uns hez the pull,
For sowl he's gettin' thinner ivery day is poor John Bull.
Fal lal the dal, &c.

Fareweel, ye merry lads, ye've oft danced in the cowld;
Fareweel to squires' sons, fareweel to pitmen bowld;
Nae mair aw'll call ye in, wor gear's wore oot begox;
Fareweel to Betty's grin, there's nae shake i wor box.
Fal lal the dal, &c. [123]

When Corvan's engagement at the Tyne ended he appears to have had no bookings at the region's larger halls. His songs were his main cashable asset, but he would need to sell around 30 manuscripts every week to get by without selling his copyrights. Several manuscripts have survived from 1862, and some have instructions in another hand that were evidently intended for a printer.

13. Eighteen stamps



Copyright

The Queen has sent a Letter
Or Hartley Calamity — By E. Corbett

Air "No Irish need apply"

Oh! bless the Queen of England, who Sympathy doth Show
Towards our Stricken Widows Amid their Grief and Woe,
Old England never had her like, nor ever will again
Then bless good Queen Victoria Ye loyal hearted Men
She sent a letter stating I Share your Sorrow here
To Soothe the aching heart & fill & dry the Widows tear

Above two hundred miners, are Entombed with the dead
Whose wives and Children dear Should not want their bit of daily Bread
And while deaths Shadow overhangs the Miners home with Gloom
Let us Calm the Widows heaving breast, for those laid in the tomb
And Ye that round Your glowing fires, life Comforts daily Share
Think of the Helpless Orphans and Widows in despair

We have heros from the Redan & Inkerman as well
Whose deeds of daring on the Field a Nations thanks can tell
But did they face the deadly Scythe, where Scarce a single breath
Held life to face eternity, to rescue life or death,
Show me the page in History, where deeds heroic Shine
More bright than Our Northumbrian men, the heros of the Mine

The Collier Well fare, as he toils, more interesting might Command
Among the Wealthy Owners and Rulers of the Land
Are they like beasts of burthen, as Roebuck once did Crave
Will Government in future Scene, the Colliers lives to Save
Why should the worn out Collier Amid his abject Gloom
Eke out the life his maker Spared. to Share the paupers doom

over

Hartley Continued

God speed the Hardy Collier, and Coulsons gallant band
Who brave at the perils of the Shaft with willing heart & hand
And ye that aided to save the sire & feed the fatherless
May he that rules over all things, ye earthly prosperity bless
The weeping & the wailing of widows let us end - Amen
And with our Queen let all men See we are the Widows friend

The Sailor on the Stormy Sea life perils often Share
Our Soldiers mid the Battles Strife, what more can do they dare
Yet both have got a chance for life, but ah! the Miners doom
'Twas said to Sleep the Sleep of death closed in a living tomb
Then man to man with heart & hand, let us still help one another
With Generous impulse to relieve a Sister or a Brother

Oh! Gather round ye Generous band, whose bounty caused a smile
To Some the face of Dark despair throughout old Englands Isle
You have taen the gloom from Sorrow where rays of hope will fall
On the Widow & the fatherless, who pray God bless you all,
For the Queen has sent a letter, tho' the Mourners Husband dear
To Soothe the aching hearts of all and dry the Widows tear

Ed. Cowan 1862

Durhamgate

X

The Portopotemans Lament, or Gladstone Budget.

2 last lines of the 1st Verse for Chorus

Air) "Lucy Neal" By E. Corran

Aws a portopotemins shadow, entirely rags an Beyns;
Creepin' like a hungry snail, haly deed among the Steyns;
O curse the Budget, and hang each themerin' thief
For raisin Rum an Whistey, Wine Brandy Breed an Beef
~~Hit jelks wad drop off Butcher meat, an leave an ham an fish~~
Iv a'wis Tarry Marry or awl Ma-key-Men and Wish
Hit Jelks wad drop off Butcher meat, an leave an ham an fish
For Gladstons raised Wor Spirits, But we cannot raise the tin
Then let us pray for better times, to Blow at ivory Skin

Mutton cums but once a Week, and iv a lump - the heed -
Sometimes a bit awd Cov' a'Show, the Butcher till when deed
As for Steyks a seldom see them, tho' sometimes a bit awd horse,
Atween mawteeth a Show for Spite, O curse the Budget Curse
Oh! Cruel was the Butchers craw, that plunged us into grief
By raisin' wor bit Mutton, an leevin' Yarmouth Beef
Oh! Scotch an Yarmouth Bloaters, a luxory iver dear -
The Chancellors Grubs not haly sae Sweet iz this Blyndd Sailor here

---

In former times wi hevin Strikes, wi cuddent raise wor Cwps
Got! iv a poor sowls. droppin' now he cannot raise his drops
Awd like to hev a Blow at now, but Friends Shew Dad be Gyped -
Oh! for a Glorious feed o' Stew, But it wis to raise the Wynd
Frae Morn to Neet upon the Nee Thou'll see me every day,
The Skeleton o' Happier days, Fadin' Fast away
Any mortal thing awd eat, Wer pickled eles & Brats
An'ee torn'at a Keglor Sawsidge man Sto Luik oot for Yer Cats

S Ponken

Confound the Yankee War - an the Budget say I -
Budget - aws gettin sae Weak I mean Body Wops -
Hit a' can Scarcely Budget - When a Chap begins
Lawk about Leevin on Cats its a Sign hes gawin

Spoken Continued -

Jammin. to the dogs, as for [illegible] it would puzzle ye to tell what Rifle [illegible] Regiments can be the. Cadgers ante Sploshers - or the Fly Artillery the last engagement a' wis in A' Marchal under a heavy fire wi two Brigades o' Rifles an one thousan guns ov heavy Cavalry, an left Chung in my rung one efternoon afore Mayfest an Journyed on to Calpee, where we fund a wounded Seapoy stoked to death wi a Baggage Waggon A' wis followed wi a Body o' the enemy the fled when They saw my noble form - twas efter surrounded Me a Defenceless myself wi desperayshin' until A' wis run through the Body by a Company ov Artillery that cum to my assistance, But Sowljerin up to Scratch - a pitchin it up they plowed me oot o the Barracks wi Musical Honors - a' wis Drumd oot - Honesty's not the best o' policy now-a-days - The biggest Rogues has the best Luck, Players an Heenan Meyk their Brags by fightin' two hours. Thro an honest Workin' man cuds work for ivir a Lifetime, A' wish a' had their chance (aws that) thin they cudsent hit me, an them that Strikes at Shadows often hits the Wall -, Chops! aws Leevin' on the Recollection o' what a' eat when a' wis Young, Since the Rise in everything A've leeved on anything Cabbage leaves - Wornt corks and Hats often felt on My Stomick - Reed Harrin - Door Knockers - an the Tother neet a Bowl o the Door (Sings)

Chorus

Tin
For Gladstones raised our Spirits but we cannot raise the
Thenlet us pray for better times to Blaw oot every Shin -

E Cowan
1862

The Death O' Cuckoo Jack

A Local Medley

1st Air) Chant — By a Local man

Ye wor celebrated Metropollis O' the North Newcassel upon Tyne
A Scullerman leeved cad'd "Cuckoo Jack, a Prince in the Grapplin' line
The Scour ee O' Coaly Tyne, an' wad it's currose Channels weel he knew,
So Local fame Soon Crowned the name, O' Jamie awed "Cuckoo,"
His Skill wis Great in Bringin' up the dead, Still what mair odd
'Tis said he Little cared for Owls! ivhe Robbit got the Boddies
But now aw'l end this little rhyme, to Chant his dyin' Strain
Confident that awed "Cuckoo" like We'll never See Ye again —

2nd Air) "Poor Mary Ann") —

November winds blaws cawd maw kinney!
Death follors on maw track
She fallin' Snaws maw shroud, maw kinney,
Thon's Coorsin' "Cuckoo Jack"
Ta! Ta to pay, ta, ta, ta pen'shin' maw ill deeds nibors never mention
But always Speak wi' Gud intention' Boot for awd Cuckoo Jack

3rd Air) "Keel Row")

Farewell tiv a' my cronies, Kee side an Sangyat Lonies,
For aikin' every bone is, I' this awd Skin O' Mine
Deed Bodys frae the River, an' ye often turn oot Clever.
Maw equal there wis never, for Grapplin' "Coaly Tyne"
Farewell tiv a &c

4th Air) "Down among the dead men"

Luika here, luika here — down below down below —
Pull away lads! pull away, lads! above luik at him Yeh Jow —
This Chep May ki' the hunred an' Seventy nine —
Deed bodys an' ye Jumt I' the Coaly Tyne
Aw's Gannin' now — So Friends Good bye —
Down Among the Scullermen Down among the Scullermen
Down — down — down — down — Down among the Scullermen
Let "Cuckoo" lie

over

Cuckoo Jack Continued - Same Air

A' mon rest wi the rest, that a' fund for my fee
An a hope that ane Nick Vennet Grapple for me
Let mans epytaff be "Here he lies on his Buck
The chap that fund the deed men Cuckoo Jack
Aws Gamin Noo &c &c

8th Air) "The Low Backet Car"

Poor Jacky's Master wunder'd Sair, he Grummilled in his Sleep,
On Vaulted out over board Inkes there, Flounderin' I' the deep,
And Neilman Bob then wi a Straw Gat Kittlet Jackys Lugs,
He Yell'd for to get his Blows, an Mast mayk folk hum bugs -
Ah! but Jacky wis dum a' Knew, He Sneezed then his Beat the Blew
Her time "twis cum, for he cuddent Sup Rum -
So he Blaired out his Last - Cuckoo - Cuckoo - Cuckoo

Jacks clay I' burial Stake nor Lay, his Last Nick Sum wis Spread
For every Yen' Boot Sang out Knew, poor Cuckoo Jack wis deed
His Sprit they Say Swem Glad away, Mang the Kinrael an Sivity Nine
Det met an Skumfished Watary crew he'd picked up Past the Tyne
Oh! they dances an they Laughed Ha! Ha!!
An Jacky they Chaffed Ha! Ha!!
Then the Ghost o' a Pollies that wis drown'd Spoke iz Follows
Thou's Joined wor Staff, Ha! Ha!! -

6th Air) "The Great Mast Pie"

Noo Sunney Jack we're a' got ye here, so tell us what the news is,
As Tynesides Spirits off wor Beer (Beer) Glad tidins will Amuse us
Iz Ralphy L - He Still alive, has Douglas yet been Captor'd
Cum try an Mayk wor Spirits flow. Wi Tynes ide News ewe splor'd
Re tol lol lol &c

Then the Ghost o' a Sailor that fell Over board through Cyphi Over much
Says he to Jack whews he'll Put to get, my purse an German Ticker.
Like Stygny Potter here a' Stand, says Jack "Odds Wounds Forsooth
Thou might easy Ferry a Marner Ower, but thou Speaks the Veyest Truth
Re tol &c -

Chorus Jack

They danced about poor Jack an yelled, Ye Might hearst this screems afar
Oh Lord, Say Jack a'wish a'wis dyff an Sung I'tha Cure Jack Tar -
King ost for Bells for Sang yt Smells, to me thou Scents like Roses,
Compared to tha Stench, this worst can Quench, where the dead shows
Repose
Re to Clol lol &c

They a'may do it Jack but he off like a Shot - he run like Rowan on table gore
And Sick Brig to follow to nab the lot, But Confident Slipt his Keyble
They Still mucken on fore Cuckoo's track, for Shelter he wis it chin
He gor them the Slip for the deevil Sut words he lost them in
Hells Kitchen

Rid lol lol &c

Copyright

Edward Cowan
Newcastle upon Tyne
Oct. 20th 1862

Copyright

Cat Gut Jim "The Tailor"

Humorous Song for the Violin

By E. Corven

Air) "Auld Lang Syne"

Awm "Cat Gut" Jim the Fiddler, A man o' Great Renown
A' play to meyk mi livin' Ladys in country an in toon.
For every fair an every feast wi my fiddle a' Repairs
Gor! where there's any fun or Sport; there's time to fynd me there

Chorus

For a' drive away dull Care, a' drive away dull Care
So patronize poor Cat Gut Jim, When yer any brass to Spare

Awl play ye any tune ye like, awl play ye cheer boys cheer,
Or te try an keep yor Spirits up, awl play the drop o' Beer
The Devil Among the Tailors Peggy pickin' down the Shore
The lass that loves a Sailor an many a dozen More

Chorus

A' play many Plane an Lucy Neal wi poor old Uncle Neil
"O Nannie wilt thou gang wi me" "Scots Wha hae Wi Wallace Bled"
A' play Mc Cloods Reel Beautifull What are ye goin' to Stane
The Heelan Laddie in a' te rags, But his happy unhappy Land

Spoken

Any mortal thing yeman Elephants trunk tee a Lucifer
Match Box - ay Street fiddlers fynds times queer just now
Customers hard te fynd - but in a' the Customers a meet
Yes me the Sailors, theres the Boys - the Bullworks in
auld England - Awm a Sailor Ye can See by the Cut o'
My Jibe A' Served mi time te be a Shipowner aboard
o' the Dredger - What a Gun boat the dredger will
Meyk When they Run Short o' Cannon Balls, they fired
For Coal Scuttles at the enemy an then thor always
Reel Supplied wi Newcastle Broonisken - Clarty
That's the Stuff te Blind the enemy - a' know a
Yast about the Sea - but the Next time a' go it will be
in a Cab. Yes! awl hev a look at it - Still Awm fond
o' Sailors, When a See's one a' Generally play them
For upon the Sea (Play for upon the Sea there)

Spoken Continues

When a' see an Irishman, thems the Boys. Hatin genus mens they give tuppence in they kervert a Jardin' in their pocket, A' Generally play them the "Exile of Erin" an "Patrick they Ones Jule o' Human Nator an the tother thats Jull o' Shillaleks an life preservers. Thems the things for clayin a Joundary skin for Stickin' plaster (Plays the Airs mentioned) When a see a Scotsman A' play "Auld Robin Gray" on the Bag pipes after the Style o' Sir Colin Campbell = Ge dicks Bucks (play here) But when a' Join the Jostwives — Thems the Boys! A' play them "Pop goes the Weazel after the Style o' Sir Walter Rally: When he tossed a Chew o' Bacey at Queen Elizabeth (Plays)

Chorus

For a drive away dull Care, a' drive away dull Care
So patronize poor Cat Gut Jim when Ge've any limito Span

Edwd Corven
1862

Copyright ✗

"The Cullercoats Fish Lass" with Dialogue

By E. Corvan

Air) "Lilli's a Lady"

Aws a Cullercoats fish lass as cosey an free
Browt up in a Cottage close on by the Sea
An a' Sell fine fresh fish, to poor Folks an rich
Will Ye buy - will Ye buy - will buy maw fresh fish.

Spoken

Fine Codlins hinny! Cheaper for keyn Consumshin than Butcher meat. Here's fine Mackerel Ma'am Mister! Ye Shud hae them it Yer awn Price but the Seas up. Oysture fish just noo's as bad to Catch is Husbands an a great deal warse to Sell

Sings) Chorus. Will Ye buy - will Ye buy Will Ye buy maw fresh fish

(Imitate cries) Dye want a-ny fi-sh.

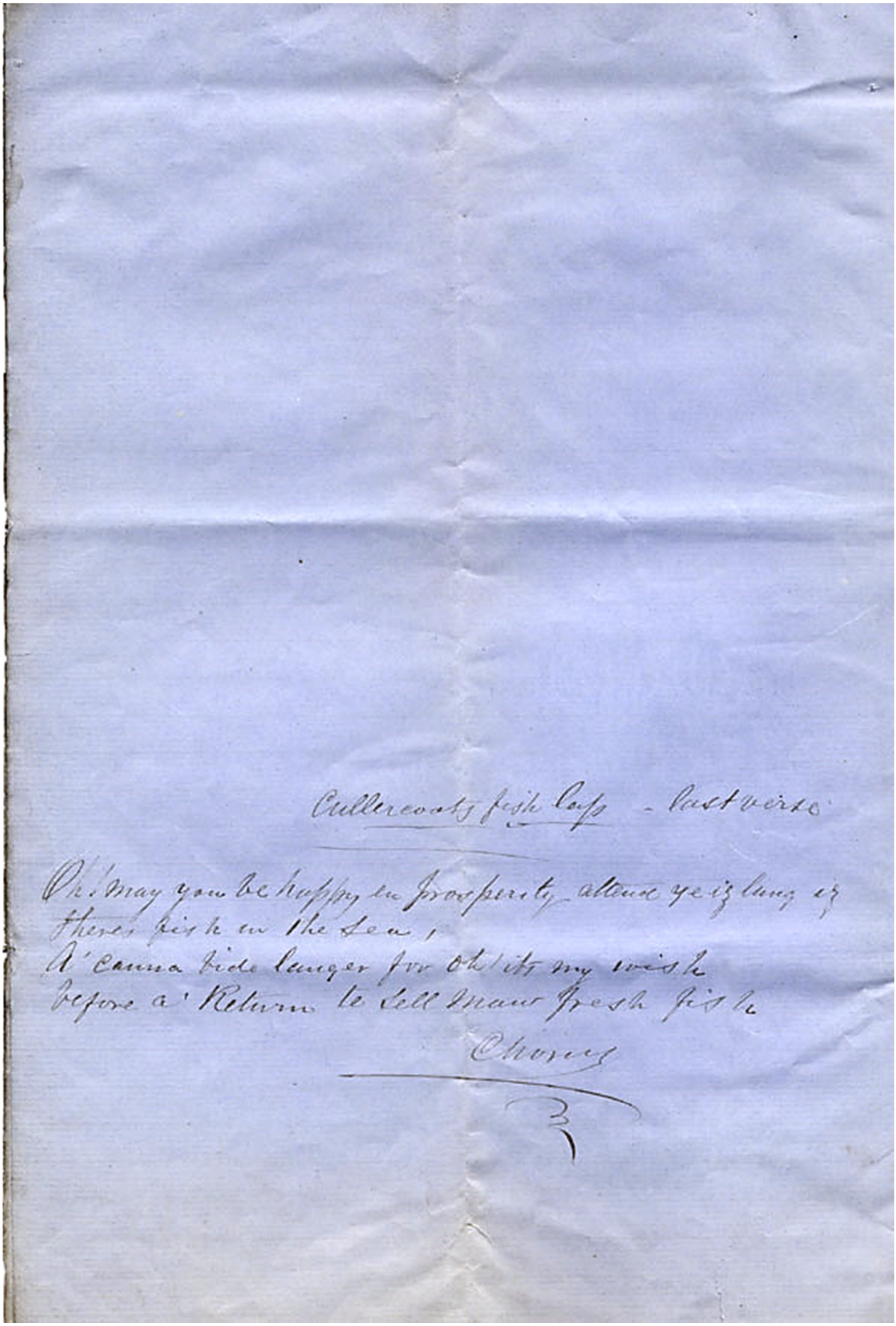
Both barefoot an bare legged a' trudge many a week
Wi my Creel on my back an a Bloom on my cheek
Aw's Supply ye wi Flatfish fine Skyt or fresh ling
An Sometimes penny wilks, Crabs an Lobsters a' bring.

Chorus -

A' work hard for my livin' from a fine a' neer Days
An a' huff the Young Gents when they peep at my legs
Aw's healthy an handsome Quite Villin an Strang
To bid for my livin' Cryin' fish the day lang

Spoken

Thats what a' Cawl fishin for a livin' but tawkin about fish Shows is queer fish an land is there in the Sea, Gladstone, Tom Sayers an Blondin' a' Cawl them Star fish that waits the Public te Some time. Folks that May Leets te visit Belmonts Music Saloon a' Consider them Flatfish. Mackays' men. Theyre dry fish Ye can tell by their Gills. Sailors they're Salt Fish that Shuse always keep a Mashe eye On land Sharks. Volunteers they're fresh fish Who with their Sou'gees an Sailors Breyk up their Sole dependence. As for me - without yer kind favowres aw'd be like a fish out o' Water - aye Wha! aws a Maiden fish out in her teens in Search in a husband te Meyk me Comfortable - a' want te Meyk moorins for life in the Annes an Channels o' prosperity - (Chorus)



Cullercoats fish lass - last verse

Oh! may you be happy in prosperity altene ye iz lang iz
there fish in the sea,
A' canna bide langer for oh! its my wish
before a' Return to sell mair fresh fish

Chorus

Dark & Stark, or the year 62

By Ed Corbett

air - "The Sly Glance"

While war's alarms, an' thunderin' guns bodes evil
An' hunger creeps round hearths where Genee trade (over the sea)
An' stuck about the times an' trade, altho' awoe cause for pause
For the good times aug a-comin, lads! will it ever come again
If this yankee war, and guess that's cause distress
An' needyashin since all workin' men stand press-
In England and poor starvin' souls gan supperless to bed
That pain wad toil like slaves to arn their daily bread -

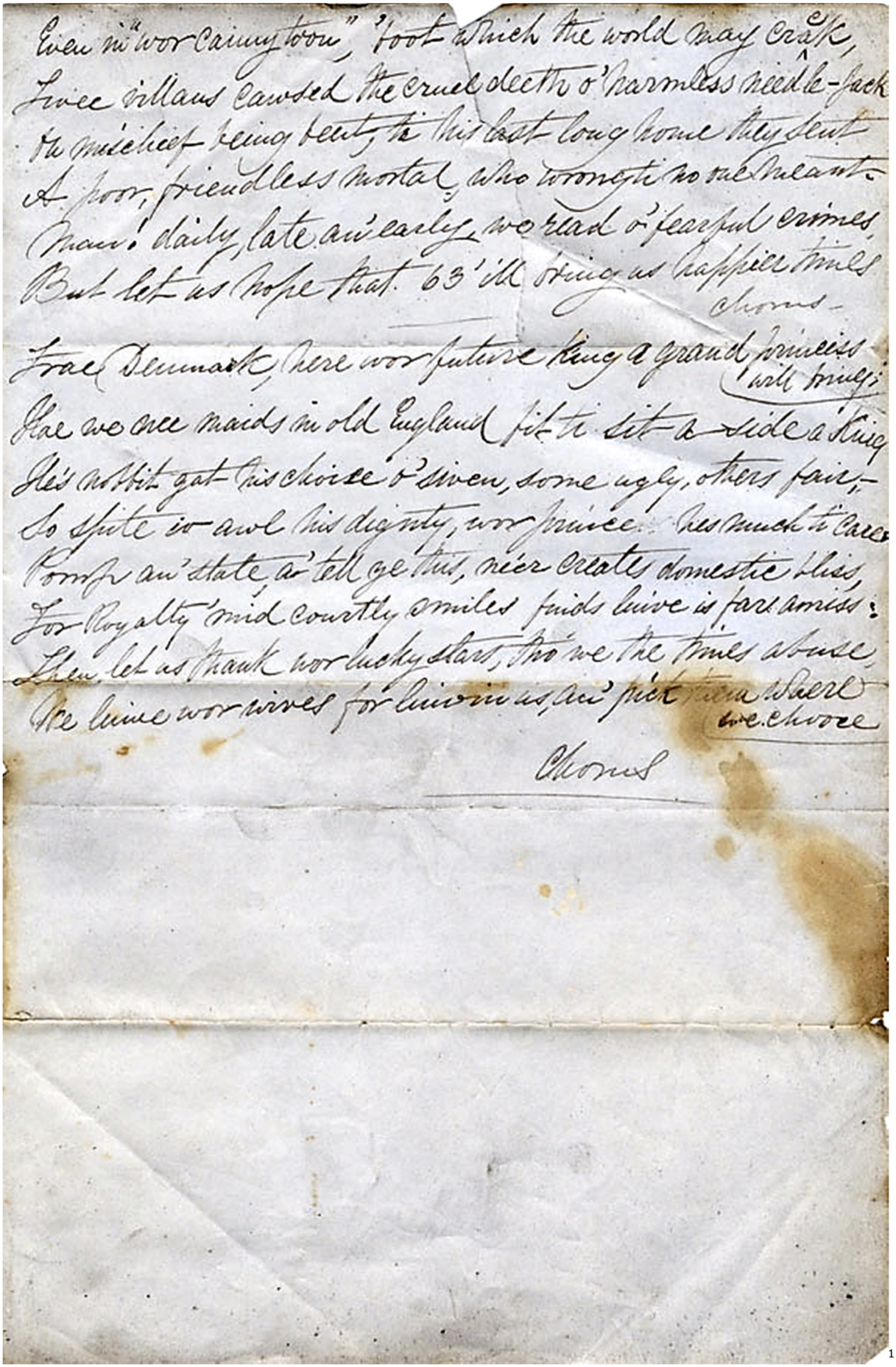
Chorus

Oh! this year sixty-two, dull an' sad sixty-two.
For master an' for man the like we never knew.
Then let us hope that better times, an' peace from over the (sea)
May smile once more on Britain's isle an' banish misery.

An' ping about street corners wi' mad pipe stuck i' my gob,
An' try to keep a pleasant face, altho' mad heart wi' throb,
Still honest poverty can claim the mean o' nee disgrace
But, lads, it's hard when hunger meets starvashin i' the face
An' wander where an' choose, mad dull hours to amuse
Gleenin information — so listen ti' mad news.
An' lounge about the cookshops outside to get a sm
An' often wish that we cud forge or swindle like Roy

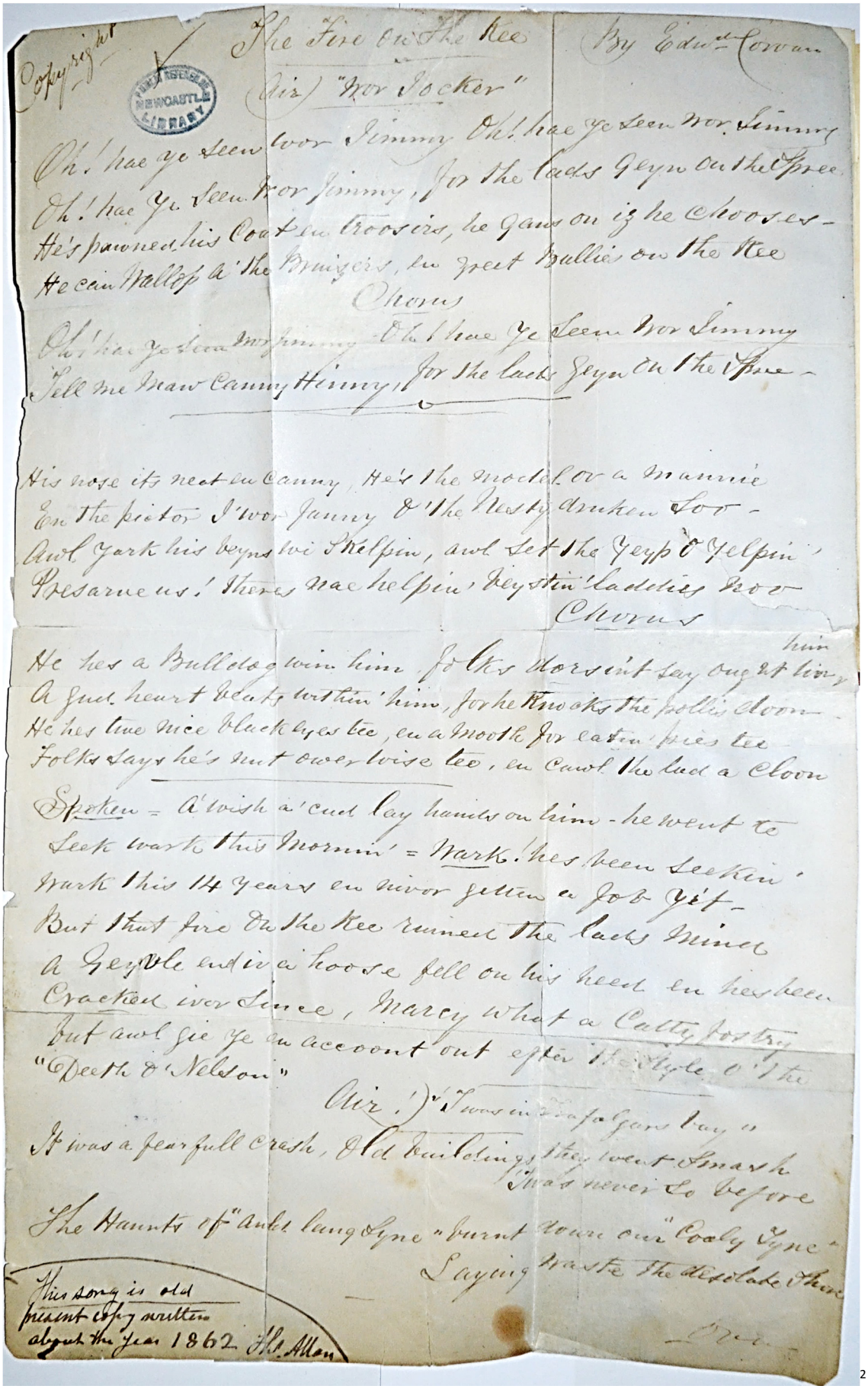
Chor

Amang wor money troubles two murder tipk
Embezzlement an' forgin - crimes fresh every day


Even in "wor Cairny toon" foot which the world may ca'sk,
Twice villans caused the cruel death o' harmless Needle-Jack
The mischief being dealt, in his last long home they dest
A poor, friendless mortal, who wrongit no one meant.
Man! daily, late an' early, we read o' fearful crimes,
But let us hope that '63 'll bring us happier times
Chorus -
Frae Denmark, here wor future king a grand princess
Has wi' him;
Has we ore maids in old England fit ti sit a side a King
He's nobbit got his choice o' them, some ugly, others fair,
In spite o' awl his dignity, wor Prince has much to care
Pomp an' state, as' tell ye this, ne'er creates domestic bliss,
For Royalty 'mid courtly smiles finds life is fare amiss:
Then let us thank wor lucky stars, tho' we the times abuse,
We have wor wives for luvvin us, an' pick them where we choose
Chorus

1

One page of another faded manuscript survives with a note by Thomas Allan autheticating Corvan's signature.



Copyright

The Fire on the Kee

By Edwd Cowan

Air "Wor Jocker"

Oh! hae ye seen wor Jimmy Oh! hae ye seen Wor Jimmy
Oh! hae ye seen Wor Jimmy, For the Lads Geyn on the Spree
He's pawned his Coat an trooseirs, he Gans on ig he chooses -
He can Wallop a' the Bruisers, an great Bullie on the Kee

Chorus

Oh! hae ye seen Wor Jimmy Oh! hae ye seen Wor Jimmy
Tell me Maw Canny Hinny, For the Lads Geyn on the Spree -

His nose its neat an canny, He's the model of a Mannie
An the pictor o' Wor Jimmy & the Nasty drunken Loor -
Awd Yark his Geyns wi Skelpin, awd Set the Geyp o' Skelpin'
Presarne us! there's nae helpin' Keystin' Ladies Noor -

Chorus

He hes a Bulldog wi him, for the Noor's nit fay ought at him
A gud heart beats within him, for he Knocks the Bollie doon -
He hes fine nice black eyes tee, an a mouth for eatin' pies tee
Folks says he's nut over wise tee, an cawd the lad a Cloon

Spoken = A'wish a' cud lay hands on him - he went te Seek wark this Mornin' = Wark! hes been seekin' wark this 14 years an nivor gotten a Job yit - But that fire On the Kee ruined the Lads Mind A Geyble end in a hoose fell on his heed an hes been Cracked ever Since, Marcy what a Cutty for try but awd Jie ye an account out efter the Style o' the "Death o' Nelson"

Air "I'se in a fog Gans hay o"

It was a fearfull Crash, Old Buildings they went Smash
That's never to be fore
The Haunts of "auld lang Syne" burnt down our "Cooky Syne"
Laying waste the dissolate Shore

This song is old
present Copy written
about the year 1862 H. Allan

2

The page is dated February 1889 on the reverse.

14. Thomas Allan

By spring 1861 the former engineers Thomas and George Allan had a stationer's shop in Newcastle. Thomas was interested in local celebrities, loved to read and listen to orators and singers, and was 'unequalled in the North of England' as a temperance activist.[1] Someone 'induced' Ned Corvan to sign the teetotal pledge and a 'philanthropist' (probably Allan) 'joyfully exclaimed: - "Ah, Edward, aa's glad to hear ye've thrawn away the bottle." "Aye, aa've thrawn it away, sor," replied Corvan, but it had nowt in't!"'[2]

According to Edward Allan, his father and uncle 'got hold of' copyrights because the writers 'were not careful men, so the songs might well have been lost, but, encouraged by the brothers, they called in the shop, ran over the songs to be written down by the brothers, and then departed, often with something from the till in their pockets'.[3] No contract with Corvan has been found, but he signed his manuscript of *The Deeth o' Cuckoo Jack* on 20 October 1862,[4] and on 10 November Thomas Allan 'got hold' of ten of George Ridley's songs. The contract does not indicate a payment,[5] but Allan claimed copyright on six 16-page penny numbers of *Tyneside Songs*.

No. 1. included Corvan's *The Deeth o' Cuckoo Jack*, *The Fire on the Kee* and *The Hartley Calamity; or the Queen has sent a Letter*, which reversed the order of the phrases in Corvan's manuscript. Most of his capital letters were changed to lower case, the long 'f' became 's', the metre and punctuation were regularised, and words were phoneticised differently or changed altogether. No. 2. had no Corvan songs, but No. 3. included *The High-Level an' the Aud Bridge*, *Bobby the Coxer*, *Oot O' Wark; Or, The Year '62*, and *The Cullercoats Fishwife*, for which Allan named a different tune, rejigged the chorus, reordered verses and changed 'Brought' to 'Browt', 'caller cods' to 'codlings' and 'folks that neglect to visit Balmbra's Music saloon a' consider flatfish' to 'Folks that neglects to buy the Illustrated Tyneside Songs, aw consider them flat-fish'. In No. 4. Allan cut a verse from *The Greet Bull-Dog O' Sheels* and made changes to *The Porterpokeman's Lament*.[6] *The Rise in Coals* was almost a decade old, and Corvan had set *The Jolly Keelman; or Tyneside For Ever* to *Donybrook Jig*, which was associated with a Dublin fair.[7]

Aw's a jolly young keelman o' Tyne,
Tho' aw wrowt i' the pits some years syne,
For puttin' or hewin', or handlin' a shule,
Am iz strong iz a bull, ye cull;
Altho' some folks says aw's a fuil, sae dull,
Iv a skiff like awd Harry, a' pull, pull, pull!

CHORUS.

Then here's "Tyneside foriver," wor awn coaly river,
Sae clivor, foriver—Huzza! ha! ha;

Noo aw dropt off pit wark, d'ye see,
An' went i' the keels for a spree;
Gat ti Sangit for war, wher aw *fit* Skipper Carr;
An' Marky Dunn, tee—nae lee—gox we cuddent agree,
D'ye see; hoots, for fightin' there's neyn can touch me.

CHORUS.

Ti the races aw went wi Sall Yewin's,
Maw claes, at the time, wis brawn new uns;
Iv a hoop, whatmically, sae neat luiked wor Sally,
Lasses ey'd her wi' froons for she bang'd a thor goons;
So we byeth spent wor croons,
An' fuddled like new uns—Sall Newin's.

CHORUS.

Then we danced fowersome reels on a board,
The best footin' the tent cud afford;
Geordie Nicholson he goz the Hawk for a spree;
An', marcy, the wives hoo they roar'd iz their crinyleens
dropt ivory yord
On the board; at last fish Hannah was floor'd—
How aw roar'd.

CHORUS.

But w suin bid ta, ta, ti the tent,
An' ower ti the race-coorse we went;
We byeth com the grand,
For we gat on a stand.
Ti bide we beth meant ti wor kelter wis spent,
But Nan's pocket was picked bin a gent
Thit smelled like a bottle o' scent.
So hyem ower the Moor we byeth went.

CHORUS.

The Caller evidently had not been published before. Pitmen and shift workers paid a man to wake them by tapping on their bedroom window with a pole and calling out. Corvan's lyrics were mainly in 'standard' English and he named no tune, so this was probably a recitation.

Why sweet slumber now disturbing, why break ye the
midnight peace,
Why the sons of toil perturbing, have their hours of
rest to cease?
Ho! marrows, tis the Caller cries
And his voice in the gloom of the night mist dies.
The twinkling stars, through night shade peering,
Blink above with heavenly light;
On the sleeping world, as a voice calls clear,
In the stilly air of the sable night.

Ho! marrows, &c.

The collier sleeps, e'en now he's dreaming
Of a pure, bright world, and loved ones there,
He basks in the rays of fortune beaming
In some far land, full and fair.

Ho! marrows, &c.

Dream on, thou poor and ill-used collier,
For slaves should aye have visions bright,
There's one above who deems thee holier
Than the wealthiest in his sight.

Ho! marrows, &c.

Speed, thee, old man, let him slumber
When happy thoughts are in his breast;
Why should the world his peace encumber?
Go! let the weary collier rest.

Ho! marrows, &c.

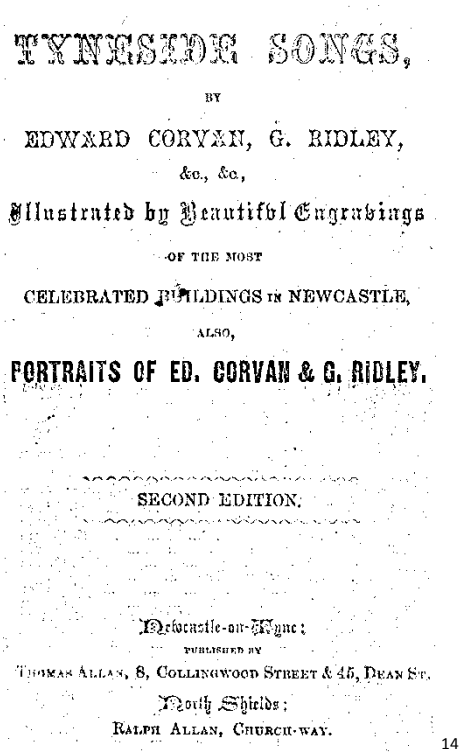
Allan renamed *Who Hung the Monkey* as *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!* and called that 'the greatest insult you can offer to the Hartlepool fishermen', but in his version nobody wanted to cut off its 'jimmy' or even thought about sleeping with him. No. 5. included *The Comet; Or, the Skipper's Fright*. A photograph of Corvan by Mr Baxter of Dean Street, Newcastle, appeared in a newspaper years later, but John Taylor made a sketch from it and it appeared in *Tyneside Songs* No. 6.

8

9

Cat-Gut Jim, the Fidlor became *Cat-Gut Jim, the Fiddler*. Allan thought it had been sung 'upwards of 2000 nights ~~& never before printed~~ And now published for the first time',[10] but he claimed in No. 6. that Corvan had sung it over 3,000 times. His first-recorded performance was in December 1855,[11] and allowing for encores and second houses that would have meant that he had engagements on most nights for almost seven years, which defies belief. *Chambers and White* and *The Queen's Visit to Cherbourg* were over three years old and *Wor Tyneside Champions* probably dated to 1860. Allan left *The Pitman* out of the title of *The Kipper'd Herring*, changed 'ti Heaven or ti H[el]l' to 'aw've nee mair to tell' and cut the penultimate verse.[12] The 'pitman' narrator in *Asstrilly's Goold Fields* no longer lamented that 'We hae nee tripe, so we struggle wi fustin – there's nae Butcher's meat here, except wild Buffaloes en Yarmouth beef', and he did not mention 'Bob Scott', the Consett 'Shingler' or that 'NED CORVAN says he's nobbit a reet 'un'.[13]

Probably late in 1862 Thomas Allan bound the six numbers together as the 'Second Edition'.



TYNESIDE SONGS,

BY

EDWARD CORVAN, G. RIDLEY,

&c., &c.,

Illustrated by Beautiful Engravings

OF THE MOST

CELEBRATED BUILDINGS IN NEWCASTLE,

ALSO,

PORTRAITS OF ED. CORVAN & G. RIDLEY.

SECOND EDITION.

Newcastle-on-Tyne:

PUBLISHED BY

THOMAS ALLAN, 8, COLLINGWOOD STREET & 45, DEAN ST.

North Shields:

RALPH ALLAN, CHURCH-WAY.

14

Ralph Allan was listed as a joint-publisher, but not George.

Early in January 1863 Mr H. Taylor sang 'some of Corvan's Newcastle songs' to amuse sawmill workers.[15] The 'entire new company' at the Tyne included Tom Handford, but Stanley advertised for 'First-class TALENT', including a 'Comic Vocalist'.[16] Days later the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reviewed Allan's *Tyneside Songs* and assumed it was all Thomas's handiwork.

ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF TYNESIDE SONGS.—Mr. Thomas Allan, bookseller, Collingwood Street, has issued a collection of songs under the above title. It comprises the *chef d'œuvres* of Ned Corvan, George Ridley, and other "local poets" of these "latter days," and is adorned by illustrations of the High Level Bridge; St. Nicholas' Church, the Old Castle, the Stephenson Monument, the New Town Hall, &c. There is also an engraving of Corvan as "Cat Gut Jim," and George Ridley, as "Johnny Luik Up." Mr. Allan's little venture, we understand, has a large sale, and is likely to be in demand for some time.

Soon after Thomas Allan advertised in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

Just Published, in Numbers at One Penny, or complete in a neat Illustrated Cover, price 6d.; Cloth embossed, 9d.
A NEW ILLUSTRATED EDITION of TYNESIDE SONGS, containing the most popular Local Songs of the Day by NED CORVAN, G. RIDLEY, &c.
In addition to being neatly printed on good paper, this Collection of Local Songs is enriched by a Series of beautiful Engravings of the STEPHENSON MONUMENT, ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, NEW TOWN HALL, HIGH LEVEL BRIDGE, and the OLD CASTLE; also Portraits of GEORGE RIDLEY, as "Johnny Leuk Up," and NED CORVAN, as "Cat Gut Jim," taken from Photographs.
Sent by Return of Post for One Stamp extra.
Published by T. ALLAN, BOOKSELLER AND NEWS AGENT, 8, COLLINGWOOD STREET, and 65, DEAN STREET.
Agent in Newcastle for the *Liverpool Daily Post*, price One Penny, same size as the London *Times*. 496

The photograph of Ridley has not been traced.

Corvan's former venue, the Fairless Arms in South Shields, and the Mariners' Arms, which was also in Wapping Street, were available to let. 'Rent moderate'.[17] The *Newcastle Guardian* reported that Thomas Armstrong had sought to recover the cost of board and lodging and a loan from 'the celebrated Tyneside singer and comedian'. Corvan did not appear at Shotley Bridge County Court, but was 'fulfilling an engagement at £2 per week', and 'His Honour made an order for 10s a month'.[18] The *Newcastle Chronicle* praised Allan's *Tyneside Songs*, but Corvan's might benefit from 'a slight amount of "touching up"'.

Mr. Thomas Allan, bookseller, of Collingwood Street, has published a neatly-printed and well-illustrated edition of Tyneside songs, by Edward Corvan, George Ridley, and other "well-known hands," and has brought it out at the moderate cost of sixpence. I have looked through it, and can safely say the little book is well worth the money that is charged. Ned Corvan is "really a very clever fellow." With a slight amount of "touching up," some of his songs might be placed amongst the best productions of our Tyneside bards. Those who have Davidson's edition of Tyneside songs will purchase this as a companion volume. And other lovers of a Tyneside "ditty" will purchase Mr. Allan's little volume for its own sake. The late Mr. Davidson's edition is now, I believe, out of print.

William Davison's *The Tyneside Songster* was over 20 years old.[19]

In March Handford advertised his People's Concerts in Sans Street, Sunderland, in *The Era*. Corvan, the 'great Tyneside vocalist and violinist', would appear for the first time, but only for a week. 'First class talent may write; silence a negative'.[20]

In Newcastle Joseph Ryan went to prison for three months for threatening to stab John Balmbra, after he refused him a drink, but the Wheat Sheaf displayed the star of Brunswick outside and an augmented company sang the national anthem inside to celebrate a royal wedding. The Grainger exhibited the Prince of Wales's feathers and the Tyne had a 'Gas star with brilliant reflectors, surrounded by a circle, with four smaller stars'.[21]

In April Handford engaged Corvan, the 'Tyneside Poet', for a one-off People's Concert in Newcastle's Nelson Street Lecture Room, where admission cost 6d or 3d.[22] Pablo Fanque's Alhambra Circus of equestrians was at the Tyne, where seats cost 2s, 1s and 6d.[23] The *Newcastle Guardian* reported that the rearranged hall was 'comfortable and neat' and had 'large and respectable audiences', while Fanque claimed it was 'CROWDED NIGHTLY!"', but offered seats at half price from 9.00pm.[24] *The Era* commended the 'first-class equestrian company',[25] and the *Newcastle Journal* noted that Sir John Fife was to attend. Early in May the *Journal* assured people of 'full value for their money'.[26]

Seven years earlier a 'notorious character' with a long 'pedigree of other convictions' had been convicted of stealing 5s from Robert Spoor in a 'house of ill fame' in Wall Knoll, Pandon, and spent six weeks in jail. In 1860 'Spoors' and another Gateshead licensee were fined 10s for 'permitting disorderly conduct,[27] but in May 1863 he performed with Corvan in Alnwick.

CONCERTS.—Mr. Robert Spoors, of Newcastle, assisted by Mr. J. L. Ashcroft and Ned Corvan, gave two concerts in the Town Hall, Alnwick, on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings to crowded and delighted audiences. Mr. Corvan's comicalities were received with roars of laughter. Mr. Spoors's solos on the violin, and Mr. Ashcroft's sentimental effusions, met with well-deserved applause. [28]

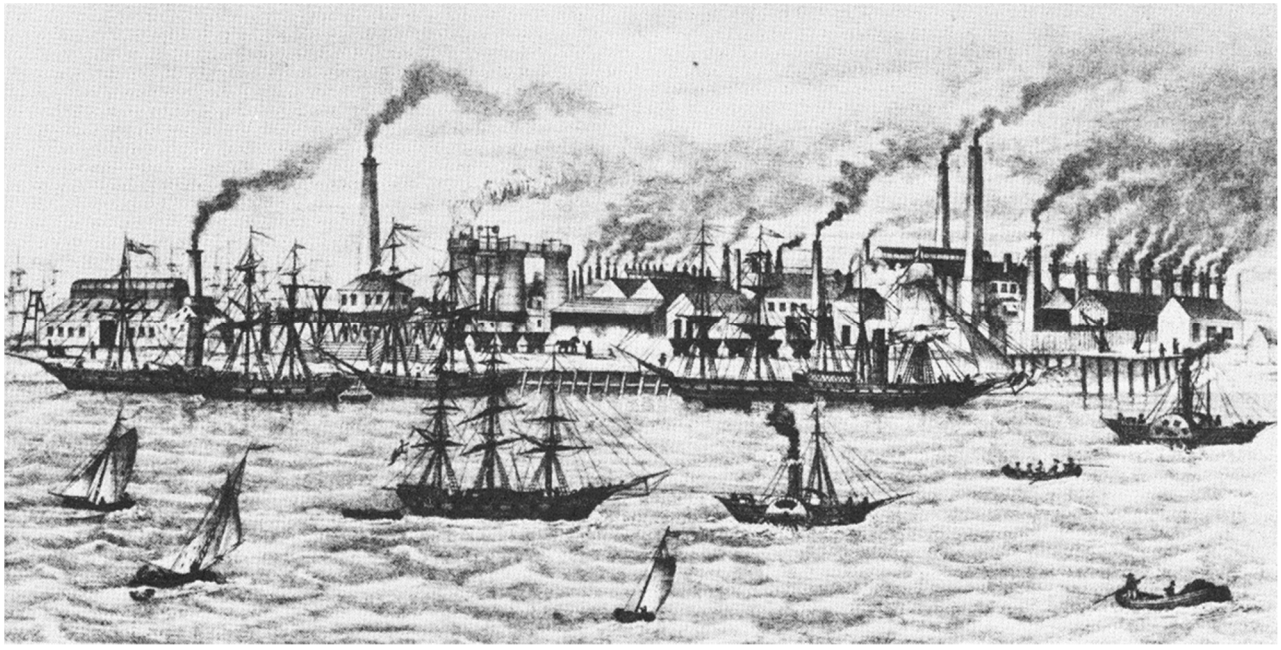
Corvan and James Spiers 'comic performances' in a tent in Bedlington Market Place during the Hopping received 'an extensive share of patronage' and they 'played off their antics before a convulsed audience'.[29]

In June Stanley closed the Tyne for the summer and laid off the musicians, so John Tute, the 'Leader of the Band' and a 'double-handed Musician (VIOLIN and CORNET)', advertised in *The Era* for a job as '*Chef d'Orchestre*'. Stanley would supply a reference. In July he announced in *The Era* that 'Talents and Novelties' were needed for the reopening in mid-August, after the interior had been 'completely remodelled and altered', and *The Era* reported on the opening night

> [T]he promenade has been extended the full length of the auditorium, the boxes raised, beautifully ornamented and cushioned, and the pit carried underneath the promenade and boxes. The stage has been considerably enlarged and a new proscenium fitted up; the whole lighted up with a very handsome chandelier; the orchestra has also been considerably enlarged and augmented, and is under the leadership of Mr. Derbyshire.

Joseph Watson Derbyshire was 'a very fine violinist', the hall was 'well filled' and the 'artistes' were 'most favourably received'.[30] Spoor's pub was evidently respectable enough to host a coroner's inquest,[31] but Corvan had gone south.

By 1850 Teesside ironworks were growing fast and the river was busy with shipping. In 1853 Middlesbrough was granted a charter of incorporation, but in 1855 Irishmen reportedly attacked police.[32] In 1856 John Billings and Mr Colinetti opened the Royal Music Hall at the Ship Inn, 29 Stockton Street, but soon closed it and focussed on their Hartlepool Theatre Royal. By 1857 James Tiley had made several alterations to the Ship Inn so it would 'rival any other establishment in the North of England'. He required 'first-rate talent' and in 1860 he wanted a 'good comic singer', but Joseph Hutchinson's Canterbury Hall, which *The Era* described as a 'well-regulated establishment', drew large audiences. Workmen were 'preparing materials for enlarging the Hall, which, when complete, will be second to none in the North of England'. Tiley advertised for a 'First-Class Comic Singer', then settled for a 'Good COMIC SINGER'.[33] In 1862 Sam Cowell and the Christy Minstrels performed in the town,[34] and William Gladstone hailed Middlesbrough as the 'Infant Hercules'.[35]



[36]

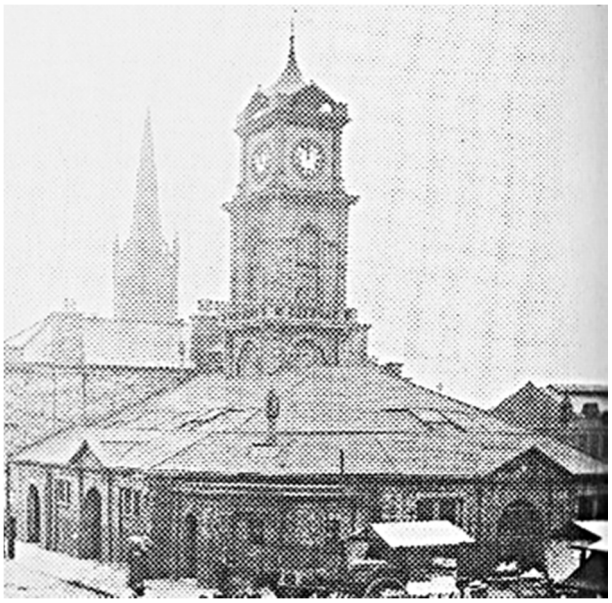
In September 1863 *The Era* reported that Corvan, the 'Tyneside comic singer and reciter', had been engaged for the Ship Inn, and he and his daughter Isabella were still there three weeks later.

SHIP INN MUSIC HALL.—(Proprietor, Mr. T. Wynn.)—We have had a host of novelties lately, and the Manager's efforts have been fully appreciated by good houses. Mr. Ned Corvan (comic singer and comedian) is the centre of attraction by his clever and amusing performances. Miss Corvan (his infant prodigy, only eight years of age) pleases remarkably well with her singing and dancing. Mr. Harry Whitfield (comic singer) has also made a hit before a Middlesbro' audience; while Mr. and Mrs. Paddy Harrison (duettists) are humorous and witty, and have their share of admirers. Miss M. Johnson (soprano vocalist), of whom we have spoken favourably before, finishes her engagement this week. The musicians are Messrs. Stewart and Atkinson.

Early in October father and daughter had a one-off engagement.

TOWN HALL.—Ned Corvan (comic singer and author) gave an evening's entertainment on Monday, to an overflowing assembly. All were greatly amused by his originality of style in representing the dialect of the Tyne, and in which he particularly sings. His daughter, Miss Carvan, eight years of age, sang and danced on the occasion. [37]

The Town Hall, which probably held a few hundred, was photographed years later.


[38]

In South Shields Billy Thompson had the Fairles Arms in Wapping Street with its 'concert room of very neat and commodious character',[39] and *The Era* reported that it was 'well attended'.[40] Thompson also chaired the Royal Collingwood Lodge of Oddfellows at the Queen's Inn in Gallowgate, Newcastle.[41]

Stanley applied for a theatrical licence for the Tyne. It had been open for two years and patronised by 'thousands of people of all classes' at prices ranging from 3d in the gallery to 1s, and no intoxicating drinks were sold on the premises. The interior had been reconstructed and was a concert hall in winter and a circus in summer. He wished to present 'performances of a higher intellectual character' so that audiences 'can not only be amused but instructed' by 'the teachings of our great dramatists'. There were two theatres in both Sunderland and Hartlepool and three in Scarborough. After 35 minutes the magistrates announced that 'if a second theatre is to be established' it should be 'of a permanent character' and declined to grant a licence. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* condemned the conduct of the 'Great I am' who 'beat up his followers and ordered them to refuse the application', but that night Stanley announced from the stage of the Tyne that he would open a new permanent theatre,[42] and *The Era* noted his request to concert hall proprietors to take money for Elijah Taylor's family to the *Chronicle*.[43] In November 'A Fishmonger' told readers of *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* about Messrs Donald and Sinclair's refurbished and respectable George Concert Hall in North Shields. It presented 'the best of negro harmony' and 'the extra charm of that inimitable local artist, Ned Corvan', with the 'wonderful breadth and humour of his local songs'. 'The refinement and delicacy of his old Scotch airs on the violin are especially delightful, while his sketches of character have all the vigour and force of a Rembrandt etching'. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*'s editor, William Edward Adams, declined to notice small venues.

> The Theatres in Newcastle, Sunderland and Shields, the Tyne Concert Hall in Newcastle, and the People's Concert Hall and the Wear Concert Hall in Sunderland, are all places where music, singing, and dramatic representations are the chief, or rather the only, sources of attraction. They all come legitimately under the title of places of amusement. The Grainger, the Wheat Sheaf and the Victoria in Newcastle, and the George Concert Hall in North Shields, on the other hand, all partake of the character of inns or hotels than places of amusement. The music in those places is made subsidiary to the supplying of refreshments, and if we once commenced the practice of noticing the singing at public-houses it would be difficult to decide where to stop.[44]

The 'respectable' Wear and Tyne had joined the ranks of 'legitimate' theatres.

In January 1864 Jane Thompson, Billy's wife, died in South Shields, aged 34.[45] In Newcastle Signor Gavazzi, a 'renowned Italian patriot', preached at the 'well filled' Tyne.[46] 'Mr E. Corvan, Tyneside Vocalist', was at the Grainger,[47] and *The Era* described him as one of the 'old established favourites', while Stanley took part in dramatic readings and a 'novel and startling' entertainment at the Tyne.[48] In February Reverend Holland 'preached to a large audience' on the 'hope of Eternal Life' at the Tyne, and another preacher was announced for the following week,[49] but one of Stanley's employees was in trouble.

> John Ritchie, bill sticker, was placed before the magistrates, charged with having pulled down some play bills, the property of Mr. Thomas Handford, at present the proprietor of the Wheat Sheaf Music Hall, Cloth Market. … The bill sticker Thompson stated that the bills had been posted by his father. Mr Thomas Handford said defendant posted bills for Mr. Stanley, and frequently his own (prosecutor's) bills

> were pulled down. He had exclusive permission from Mr. Young, in Neville Street, to post his bills the whole length of the wall facing the cattle market … and it would cost him about 20s to replace the bills.

The magistrates fined Ritchie 2s 6d and costs and 'declared that the rivalry should cease, as it was very inconvenient for them to judge upon such cases'.[50] Stanley engaged James Henry Stead, a veteran of Billy Purvis's company, and he 'met a flattering response'.[51]

In South Shields 'Mr Edward Corvan' sang 'several humorous songs, to the great delectation' of almost 1,000 people at the Ancient Order of Foresters' benefit for the Widows and Orphans Fund in the Mechanics' Institute.[52] Then he went south again. The 'Tyne-side poet, author, and comic vocalist' was engaged at the Amphitheatre and Concert Hall in King Charles' Croft, Leeds, with the 'Funny Blacks, Messrs Hall and Davis'. In April, after a flood killed 250 people in Sheffield and the queen sent £200 for their families,[53] the company gave a benefit, and Corvan advertised a 'Serio-Medley', *The Sheffield Calamity* and *Always read* The Times *in the morning* in *The Era*, for 15 postage stamps.[54] Neither song has been found.

In Newcastle Stanley engaged John Pritchard, the 'celebrated tragedian' at a 'heavy expense', and when he and Stanley performed a scene from *Othello* they were 'enthusiastically applauded'.[55] In May Balmbra auctioned the Wheat Sheaf's contents,[56] but remained as secretary of the Licensed Victuallers Association,[57] and in June the Steam Engineer Makers' Society gave him a 'beautifully chased silver snuff box' to mark 'about 25 years' as a landlord.[58] In July Michael M'Kenna, a 26-year-old labourer, stole lead worth £1 from James Rowe's brew-house in the Wheat Sheaf yard and was sent to the House of Correction for a month. The *Newcastle Guardian* noted that the Tyne had 'undergone an entire remodelling, being re-decorated and the stage greatly enlarged', and praised the famous actress, Juliet Desborough, who played to 'crowded houses nightly'. She went on to receive 'golden laurels' at the Theatre Royal, then Stanley re-engaged her and she played Juliet in scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. Stanley, 'though rather too light for *Friar Lawrence*', performed 'creditably'.[59]

Stuart Henry Bell was born in Newcastle in 1823. In 1841 the '20'-year old 'Painter' lived with his father, a '60'-year-old 'Tanner', in a Pandon 'Entry'. Henry Hall had come from the Strand Theatre in London to manage the Theatre Royal and taught Bell to paint scenery.[60] In 1850 *The Era* admired his work at Ely theatre, but by spring 1851 the 'Artist' lived in Grantham with his 29-year-old wife, Martha, born in Barton near Oxford. In autumn Bell's scenery for Bury theatre in Lancashire was 'of the most costly description', but he lost the sight of an eye. By 1852 he was a partner in the theatre, which held 1,000 people,[61] and engaged London stars,[62] and by late that year he was the sole proprietor. In 1853 he managed Spalding theatre and produced *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: in 1854 he opened a new theatre in Grantham and then a 'colossal' New Theatre in Spalding; in 1855 he painted scenery for Sunderland Theatre Royal and in 1857 he opened a wooden theatre in North Shields. By 1860 he painted scenery for the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Sunderland and settled in the town. His wife died, and he married Martha Reynolds in South Shields in 1862. In 1863 he rebuilt the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and called it the Wear Music Hall. *The Era* noted the 'most talented company' and the 'act drop' of images of a ship from launch to wreck. Bell claimed that the Wear was 'the most magnificent Music Hall in the Provinces' and booked artists in between their engagements at the Tyne in Newcastle and Glasgow City Hall. By summer 1864 he leased the Royal Lyceum Theatre and gave a benefit to widows and orphans of shipwrecked mariners, and in autumn he dedicated an 'act drop', 'The Seamen's Friend', to the National Lifeboat Institution.[63]

George Ridley died in Gateshead, aged 29, and 'Elfin' of the *Chronicle* thought about 'poor Ned Corvan'.

> I have not seen his name mentioned, or heard of him, for a year or more. He left Tyneside for Leeds some time ago. I wonder how he succeeded amongst the Yorkshiremen. Ned was the legitimate successor to Billy Purvis, and had he not liked the bottle so well, would have worked his way to a distinguished position as a comedian. He had rare natural gifts, but they were wasted by his love for liquor.[64]

The Era reported that Corvan had an engagement in Dundee for a fortnight and 'displays some humour in his comic signing'.[65] In August the 'Fairless Arms' Music Hall in South Shields was open every weekday evening with a 'Talented Company'. 'Mr W. Thompson, Local Comic Singer', appeared in September; but the hall was not in the most salubrious part of town, and soon after a bloody fight outside attracted a large crowd.[66] In North Shields Donald had closed the George for redecoration, but wanted 'First-class TALENT in every Branch of Concert Business' for it and the Newcastle Grainger in October.[67]

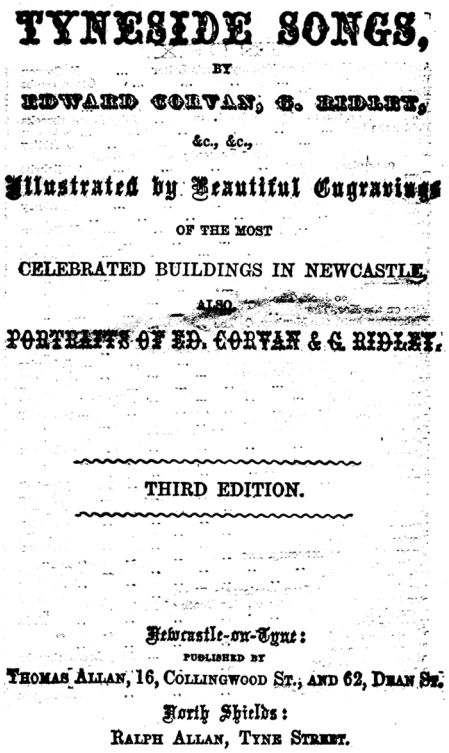
Joshua Bagnall owned 'numerous public houses' in Newcastle,[68] including the Albion Inn in Newgate Street and the Royal Scotch Arms,[69] but he now lived at the Wheat Sheaf, 'late Balmbra's',[70] and told potential customers that he 'hoped by keeping a choice assortment of every article connected with the Trade to merit their support'.[71] The Northumberland and Newcastle Yeomanry Corps presented Quartermaster Balmbra with a purse of gold,[72] and 50 'gentlemen' gave him a pair of gold eye glasses and £125 for his 'honourable and courteous conduct and affable manners during the 28 years he had been a licensed victualler.[73] Meanwhile, Stanley was managing a theatre in Somerset, and early in November he acted at the Theatre Royal in Cheltenham.[74]

Corvan was the 'chief comic singer' at the Wear in Sunderland. His 'ingenious performances' were 'received with great applause' and attendances were good. There was a Tyne Concert Hall in South Shields,[75] but the Fairles Arms Music Hall remained 'Open every evening with a talented company. Changes every week'.[76]

Almost 80 years later a Newcastle man found 'a letter in the dialect' which described a visit to the Grainger in Newcastle in November 1864, where the writer heard 'rare Ned Corvan - the clivorest Tyneside singer oot'.[77] Joseph Cowen chaired 'a numerous meeting' of the 'Testimonial Committee' for the sculler Robert Chambers at the Half Moon Inn in Mosley Street. Already £50 had been received and a 'considerable sum' was promised and the committee accepted Stanley's offer of the Tyne

for a benefit.[78] Early in December, after an engagement At the Fairless Arms in South Shields, Mr and Mrs Cleveland sailed to Dundee for a 12-night engagement, but they and their three children drowned on the way.[79]

In Newcastle Thomas and Ralph Allan published the 'Third Edition' of *Tyneside Songs* and gave Corvan top billing.



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North Shields:

RALPH ALLAN, TYNE STREET.

Only the title-page and Index have been traced, but the book included the same 19 Corvan songs as the 'Second Edition'.[80] The 'Renowned NED CORVAN' was still at the Grainger, but he also performed for the Chambers Testimonial Fund at the Cooperative Large Room at St. Anthony's, which held 'upwards of 300 people' and was crowded. The 'celebrated original local singer and *comique*', who was 'present through the kindness of Mr Donald', 'kept the house in titters during the whole time he was before the audience',[81] 'with his whimsicalities and queer sayings', and 'was encored three times before he was allowed to bow his farewell, having to appear at Shields at nine o'clock'. Days later the Tyne in Newcastle was 'overflowing' with an enthusiastic audience' who donated £10 13s 9d to the Chambers Fund.[82] Joshua Bagnall and William Walter Blakey reopened the Wheat Sheaf as the Oxford Music Hall with its 'handsome new proscenium'. They engaged Joe Wilson, the young 'Tyneside bard and vocalist',[83] and Billy Thompson as chairman, since his 'genial, good-humoured face, and his quick and ready-witted sayings', were well known,[84] and 'a single flash of humour' would 'curb the most turbulent audience'.[85] William Adams recalled that Thompson was 'a fat man with a fund of coarse humour', but one visit to the Oxford and the Victoria was 'enough'. 'Donald's I never entered', and the Tyne was 'a long way the best of the variety shows'.[86] Stanley hosted concerts in aid of the slaves freed by the Union army in the USA,[87] and the *Chronicle* stated that 'We deplore the prejudice against colour, and we are severely censorious towards those who exhibit it'.[88]

In January 1865 Stanley staged a 'Grand Comic Pantomime' at Cheltenham Theatre Royal,[89] then returned to the Tyne. The *Newcastle Guardian* noted that he spared 'neither expense nor trouble in obtaining first-class talent' and was 'amply rewarded'.[90] Donald wanted a 'First-class PIANIST' for the Grainger,[91] and the *Guardian* reported that the 'celebrated Ned Corvan' played to full houses and was 'decidedly the "star of the evening"', since he 'keeps the audience continuous laughter' with his 'drolleries and queer original sayings'.[92] One member of the audience recalled his 'inimitable drollery and humour' and believed that 'The Queen's Letter to the Hartley Colliers' had 'poetic merit'.

> His humour was irresistible, yet the next moment could subdue his auditors into the very depths of pathos. His black board sketch of Billy Purvis was excruciatingly droll. He was wont to draw profile of the immortal Billy, and when he came to the mouth, the house was convulsed by his remark, 'Many a three ha'porth went down there that he never paid for'.

Corvan was a 'neglected genius', but 'wayward'.[93] John Embleton Smith also recalled the 'mixed entertainment' in 'the large room of the Grainger Hotel'.

> The concerts which took place nightly were of the free-and-easy type, and were not specially noted for their refinement. Our local comedian was, on the evening of my visit to this public resort, in his best form, and sang, amidst the wildest enthusiasm, his most famous ditties. A few of the audience, however, gave expression to certain rather uncomplimentary opinions as to the quality of the Tyneside ballads whose rendering had provoked such unbounded laughter. These critics were strangers to the Northumbrian dialect, and hence were incapable of appreciating the wit and humour of the songs. Their objections were, however, soon silenced by the versatile talent which the comedian subsequently displayed. At a later stage of the entertainment, Ned, with a roguish twinkle in his eye, thus addressed the miscellaneous audience before him: - 'Noo, ma freends, wad ye like to hear me play the Carnival – what do they call'd – 'de Venis',

> on the fiddle, or draw ye the phiz of Napoleon on the blackboard?' Before the question could be answered, the accomplished entertainer swept in a masterly style the strings of his violin, which responded in the grand chorus of Paganini's *piece de resistance*. Ere the thunderous plaudits of the delighted assembly had died away, he produced from his pocket a piece of chalk, with which he drew in rapid succession the most life-like portraits of then living celebrities, including the late Emperor of the French, Mazzini, Kossuth, and others.[94]

(The Hungarian revolutionary nationalist, Lajos Kossuth, had been in Newcastle in 1856,[95] and he and Mazzini had visited Joseph Cowen at Stella Hall.[96]) Donald advertised in the *Chronicle* that, 'after a Tour of Twelve Months, the old-established favourite Tyneside Comic Vocalist, Ned Corvan', would 'appear for a limited period'.

Donald's Grainger in North Shields held 1,000 at prices of 3d, 4d and 6d, but it was open only in winter. In Newcastle Smith's Victoria held 500 who paid 6d on the ground floor and women could enter the gallery which held 250 for 3d; but the Tyne admitted women unconditionally. Early in February Corvan was at the Grainger,[97] which held up to 300 who paid 6d, but 'no females or boys' were admitted, and the *Newcastle Guardian* believed that his engagement was

> likely to continue, for unless this 'native genius' who combined vocal and instrumental music, as well as the art of drawing, makes his appearance two or three times a night the audience becomes uneasy and restless – he appears to be the life and soul of the Grainger Hotel Concert Hall, and we should almost say from the enthusiasm he receives, very like a 'fixture'.[98]

In April *The Era* noted he was 'one of the reigning favourites', and maintained his *'prestige*' at the 'fashionable lounge.[99] Corvan lived in Thornton Street, off Westgate, and when Thomas Allan visited him he found that 'his voice was gone & he spoke in a thick husky tone' that was 'little more than a whistle'.[100] His health 'had been failing' and 'grew worse',[101] and his singing 'failed considerably', so he 'had to rely more than before on extra attractions', such as patter, fiddling and drawing.[102] One night, when Joe Wilson was singing *Aw wish yor Muther wad cum* at the Oxford, Corvan was in the audience, and a 'friend' (probably Allan) sitting beside him said, "A good song that, Ned." "Yes," said Ned in a voice which toward the end had become almost a hoarse whisper. "Yes," said he huskily, "a gud song, but aw'm writin' one that'll knock its end in"'.[103] By May Corvan was in 'great distress' and the *Chronicle* organised a benefit at the Nelson Street Lecture Room to enable him to 'rusticate for a time'.

> Mr R.P. Bell has given the use of the room free, and many of Ned's old professional friends are going to lend their assistance on the occasion. I hope all his admirers will make appoint of attending. Poor Ned has many times made the public merry. I hope they will remember him in his hour of sickness and broken health.

Fellow performers turned out in force.

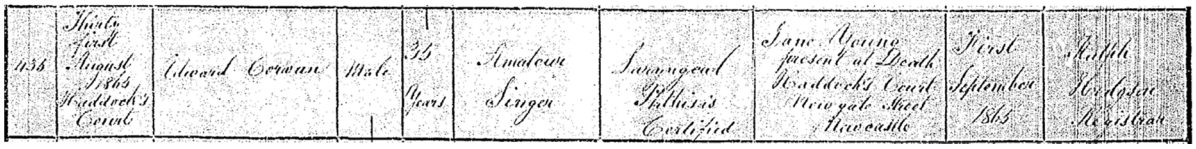
> The Misses Hartley and Ormsby from the Grainger Concert Hall sang several pleasing songs, and were loudly and rapturously applauded. Sapphrini from the Oxford, and Miss Annie James from the Victoria Music Hall, also came in for their share of plaudits. Several gentlemen, by their grotesque and humorous songs kept the house in a continual roar of laughter. Mr Joe Wilson, at present singing at the Oxford Music Hall, was one of the many performers.[104]

The Era reported sympathetically.[105]

Corvan's former printer, William Reay Walker, died in Albert Street, Shieldfield, Newcastle,[106] and his executors put the press up for sale,[107] but a solicitor's clerk forged a signature and stole £6 from the estate,[108] and it would take almost two years to settle Walker's affairs.[109]

Billy Thompson's 'too easy temperament and kindly disposition' had 'unfitted him from making headway' in South Shields,[110] and 'All that PUBLIC HOUSE, known as the Fairless Arms," with a Garden behind, situate on the East side of Wapping Street, at present occupied by Mr. William Thompson, with a Shop and Room attached thereto in the occupation of John Richardson', was put up for auction.[111] Meanwhile, James Spiers had gone south and was engaged at the Oddfellows' Hall and the Ship Inn in Middlesbrough.[112]

Four years earlier 47-year-old Jane Young, a Scots-born bookbinder, had lived at 1 Rosemary Lane in Newcastle with her daughter Jane, who had been born in Edinburgh and was also a bookbinder. On 31 August 1865 one of them was probably present at Corvan's death in Haddock's Court off Newgate Street, which had at least 110 separate dwellings and must have been a tenement.[113] On 1 September the Registrar recorded the age of the 'Amateur Singer' as 35, though he was 37.



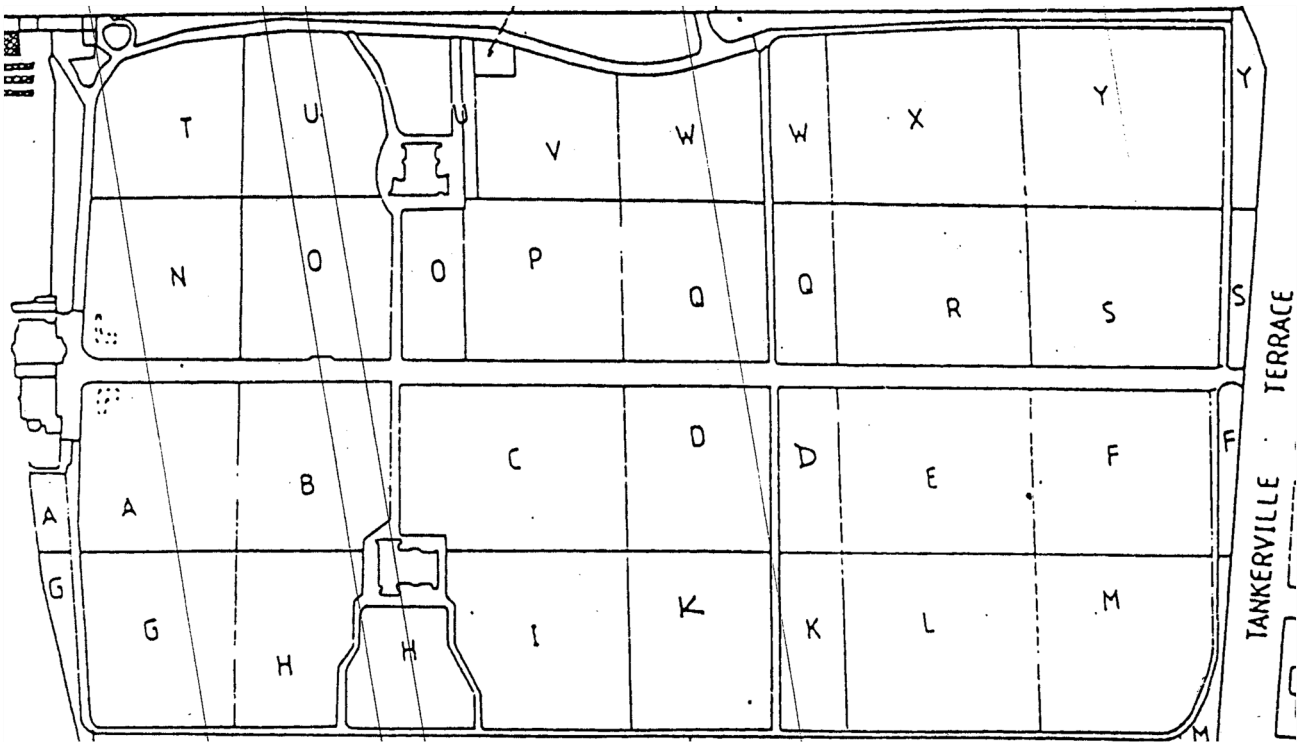
Tuberculosis of the larynx was associated with smoking tobacco from an early age and heavy drinking, and caused breathlessness, hoarseness and irreversible changes in voice quality.

Next day the *Newcastle Guardian* published an obituary of the 'celebrated local comique'.

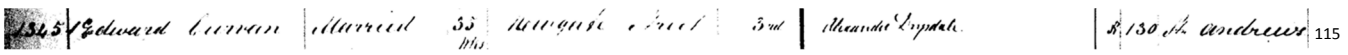
> During his life no man had gained greater reputation than Corvan as a comic singer, and wherever he was engaged there hundreds crowded to hear and see the funny sayings and doings of "poor Ned." He has now gone the way of all flesh, and the only thing that the public, or at least the friends of the poor bard, can do is to assist the family. Mr Marks, an intimate friend, has taken great interest in the

welfare of the family; and through his exertions, and those of Mr Sinclair, the parish is spared the expense of the interment, several of Corvan's admirers having very heartily responded to the solicitations of these gentlemen to give their quota towards securing respectable funeral for the deceased.[114]

On the 3rd Corvan was buried in plot B130, near the top right corner of plot B in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Jesmond.



It was unconsecrated ground, and most recent burials had had no clergyman in attendance. Alexander Drysdale of St. Mary's Catholic Church officiated at Corvan's graveside, but his age was misrecorded as 35 in the burial register.


115

No record of Isabella Corvan or their children being present has been found.

On the 4th the *Newcastle Guardian* carried an obituary for the fiddler Bobby Spoor, who was also known as 'Bobby the Black'.[116] On the 9th Billy Thompson's 'AN AWD HEWOR'S OPINIONS' in the *Gateshead Observer* responded to Corvan's death.

> Sin aw last rote to ye, aw've varry ny commiteed mordor. Just as maw letter gat inti the post a menadge man [a seller of goods on credit] that cums tiv wor neybors iviry fortnith telld us that Ned Corvan was deed, so black as aw was, aw went ower ti the farm hoose to get the lady that tyeks the milk inti the toon, ti tyek word ti ye iv a letter aw gav him, so as ye cud get the news i time, an the trashy yep cam back an sed he'd forgettin. Aw was eatin a favorit dish o' mine – pees puddin an bacon – hinney, aw was that vexed, aw up wi' the dish an let the pees puddin flee at his jaws, and scadded the bastard. Ey, poor Ned's gyen, an was barried on Sunday. Did ye iver heer him play the fiddle or sing the Sangeyt Lass. He cud myek ye owther laff or cry. Thor's a subscripshon ti put his widdo intiv a huckster shop ti help ti drag the bairns up. Mister Huster, iv Bell's Kitchin ill tyek onything onybody liks ti giv.[117]

On the 11th 'Elfin' wrote an obituary in the *Newcastle Chronicle*.

> A subscription is being got up for the benefit of the family of poor Ned Corvan to mark his grave and support his widow and children. Any of my readers who can spare a trifle and will leave it at the Tyne Concert Hall, or at Donald's Hall in Grainger Street, will be doing a service to those who have been left behind him to fight through this life unaided and alone. Poor Ned! I met him last on Collingwood Street some months ago. It was very manifest that the hand of death was on him. He complained of a cough and cold, little thinking the cough was to kill him. He was a man of considerable natural ability, and had he loved whiskey less, he would have worked his way to an honourable position in his profession. A real 'Newcassel' man he knew the peculiarities of the people well. He was a sort of second Billy Purvis, but he lacked Billy's breadth and force of character. His 'Cat-gut Jim', his imitation of the bagpipes, his song about the 'Soup Kitchen' and the performance of the famous old farce of his old master, 'Whe stole the bundle?' are familiar to many in this district. They recall old times and old scenes when poor old Billy's 'pavilion' was a standing institution at our local merrymakings. We have no 'Victoria' theatres now, but some of the men that were connected with that popular place of amusement have risen to eminence in their profession. None might have risen higher than our departed friend Ned, had his love of the bottle not marred his chances of success.[118]

On the 12th Stuart Henry Bell gave a benefit for Corvan's widow and orphan children at the Wear in Sunderland.[119] On the 14th the *Newcastle Journal* supported the financial appeal.

> An appeal is being made to the public on behalf of the widow and orphan children of the late Mr. Edward Corvan; and the appeal is worthy of being responded to, both on account of the character of the deceased and of the condition of his family. Mr. Corvan's career is so well known on Tyneside that of himself little need be said. He was a man of great natural talent; and was well skilled in music, painting, aud other fine arts. He was a wit; with a generous, kindly, and affectionate disposition. He had indeed, a most excellent fancy, and was fit to be jester to a king, and many a time and oft has he caused large audiences in this town and neighbourhood to laugh heartily at his genuine wit and humour—qualities which money cannot purchase. Poor Ned; like too many gifted and talented men, he was a great enemy to himself; but he is departed, and his place cannot easily be filled. During his illness, he was carefully attended to by gentlemen who were his professional brethren at the Grainger, Victoria, and Oxford Music Halls; and particularly Mr. Sinclair, whose attentions were unremitting, and who did not cease his care of his friend with his death, but who along with Mr. Marks, saw that his mortal remains were decently and reverently placed beneath the sod. These acts of kindness are worthy of being recorded, showing the kindly feeling existing amongst brethren of the profession to which the lamented deceased belonged: and any of these gentlemen will gladly receive any donations on behalf of Mr. Corvan's widow and children.[120]

A 'Patron of the Drama' sent 10s and 'the gentlemen who are collecting the subscriptions' could pick it up at the *Chronicle*.[121]

Early in October, at Newcastle Police Court, Jemima Dixon accused Annie M'Intyre of stealing her clothes.

> They came to Newcastle together and lodged together in a brothel in Leazes Lane, and one fine morning M'Intyre got out of bed sooner than usual, dressed herself in Dixon's clothes, and went out, leaving her own, and did not return again. She was afterwards seen by Dixon in the Grainger Concert Hall, and accused of the theft. Mr Hamond asked if the police ever visited the Grainger Concert Hall. Inspector Amos replied that it was visited every night, but there was never any disturbance … [and] females were not allowed into the concert hall; they usually met at the bar. … The prisoner was sent three months to prison.[122]

A fire in a nearby building 'considerably charred' the Tyne,[123] though most patrons had left, and this event was newsworthy across the north.[124] Soon after George and Ruth Stanley were engaged at North Shields Theatre Royal. The *Shields Daily Gazette* wished her a 'bumper' benefit,[125] and by December George Stanley managed Darlington Theatre Royal.[126]

Thomas Allan published a new edition of his songbook, with a different title, and Corvan came first on the title-page.

A

CHOICE COLLECTION

OF

TYNESIDE SONGS,

BY

E. CORVAN, G. RIDLEY, J. P. ROBSON,
R. EMERY, &c., &c., &c., &c., &c.,

ILLUSTRATED BY

BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS

OF THE MOST CELEBRATED

BUILDINGS IN NEWCASTLE

AND NEIGHBOURHOOD,

TO WHICH IS ADDED A GUIDE TO NEWCASTLE.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne:
PUBLISHED BY
THOMAS ALLAN, 16, COLLINGWOOD STREET,
AND 45, DEAN STREET.
NORTH SHIELDS:—RALPH ALLAN, CHURCH WAY.

The first 96 pages contained the same 19 Corvan songs as previous editions,[127] but there were none of his in the six 14-page sections that followed. Allan was evidently prospering, but years later he recalled that Isabella Corvan had 'many a hard struggle' raising her three orphaned children.[128]

15. The Grim Reaper

Early in 1866 21 members of the Oxford company in Newcastle and 66 others presented Bagnall and Blakey with an 'elegant eight-day, elaborately gilt timepiece' and 'two handsomely got up inscriptions, in gold letters on Oxford blue silk' in 'massive gold frames', for 'their kindness to the professionals generally, and for closing their hall on Christmas night, when all others were open'. Billy Thompson was vice-chair and J.P. Robson was among the 'numerous and respectable' audience.[1]

Joseph Cowen and Edward Glynn were financing the construction of a very large theatre.[2]

> An extensive tract of ground has lately been purchased in the Westgate a few doors above Thornton Street, by a party of capitalists, on which it is intended to erect a Theatre on a very large scale. The building will face Bath Row, and extend backward as far as Temple Street westward, the whole of the property extending from the Westgate, in the above direction, having been transferred to the projectors. The front of the building will, it is understood, occupy the sites on which the well-known 'Old Boar's Head' and 'Old Crown' hotels at present stand. The preliminaries in the rear have already been commenced, some massive pillars having been run up. A deputation of gentlemen from this town are at present in London, having for its object the inspection of the internal arrangements of the whole of the metropolitan theatres, and with a view to introduce the latest improvements into the new erection. Mr George Stanley will, it is said, be the manager of the new theatre.[3]

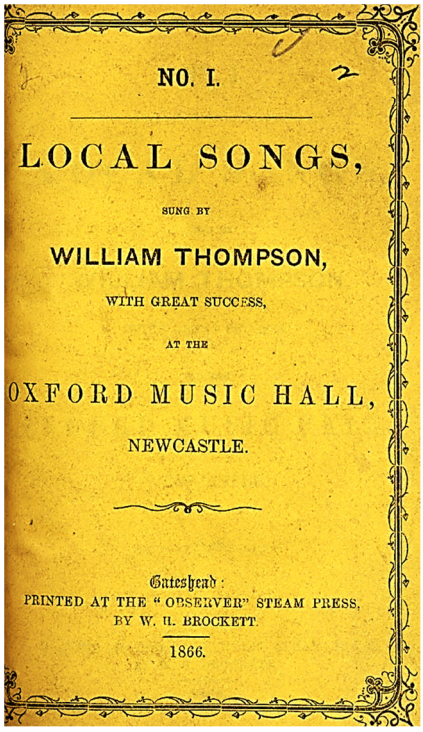
Adam Donald closed the Grainger.[4]

In spring *The Era* noted that Mr Wynn of the Ship Inn Music Hall was 'about to enter premises of his own not convenient for concerts' and 'we shall be left without a Concert Hall' in Middlesbrough. 'Any Manager who understands the business would find in Middlesbrough a good chance to speculate'. Across Britain 'stars' were exploiting their popularity.

> JAMES TAYLOR, Champion Comique, begs to thank London Proprietors for their kind and liberal offers, but has to intimate that his remunerative Provincial Engagements preclude the possibility of his treating for the Metropolis at present. The following may be a criterion of Salaries paid to Comic *Artistes* by Provincial Proprietors, J. T. having received One Hundred and Two Pounds Six Shillings from G. Stanley, Esq., Tyne Concert Hall, Newcastle, and of J. Hobson, Esq., of Leeds, for One Turn Nightly, the former Engagement being for Thirteen, and the latter for Twelve Nights only, and is Re-engaged upon the same terms. The following guarantee to Provincial Proprietors: - J. T. has drawn more money into the above Establishments than has ever been taken since they have been Music Halls.

Taylor had a few vacant dates before 'commencing his SLAVERY with Mr. Shearer, of Glasgow, on the 5th November'.[5]

On Tyneside Billy Thompson was bankrupt and agreed to pay creditors 2s 6d for every £1 he owed.[6] He was in his late forties, but married his third wife, 'a blooming damsel numbering twenty-six summers'.[7] In April, with Mr Boyd of the *Gateshead Observer* in the chair, friends gave Thompson a gold watch and guard,[8] and the *Observer* printed a songbook.


NO. I.

LOCAL SONGS,

SUNG BY

WILLIAM THOMPSON,

WITH GREAT SUCCESS,

AT THE

OXFORD MUSIC HALL,

NEWCASTLE.

Gateshead:
PRINTED AT THE "OBSERVER" STEAM PRESS,
BY W. H. BROCKETT.

1866.

Two songs were by Thompson, one was by Bagnall and the rest were by 'the Legitimate Bard,' J.P. Robson.[9] The *Observer* reported that Thompson sang 'with a quiet humour all his own, never perhaps surpassed in his native district', and the songbook had a 'large sale',[10] but no second number has been found.

Around this time Joe Wilson set *Dan's Apprehension!* to the tune of *The Rigs and Fun of Nottingham Goose Fair*.[11]

Aw'll tell ye lark aboot a chep,
A famous consart man.
That once cud bring the hooses doon,—
Just noo aw'll call him Dan,
It waddint de te tell his nyem,
It might amuse a few,
But still 'twad de ne gud te them
If his real nyem they knew:
He used te sing at consarts i'
The country roond aboot,
A real gud-hearted jolly sowl,
O' that thor is ne doot.

He got engaged te sing sum sangs,
An' keep up his renoon,
At a quiet little country place
Not ten miles frae the toon;
He packt his carpet-bag wi' things
Te suit myest ivry age,
False whiskers, paint, an' claes an' wigs,
He needed for the stage;
Then off he set—got landed there,
An' pleased the foaks se weel,
They waddint let him cum away
Till tipsy he shud feel.

He sat an' drunk till late at neet,
The last train lang had gyen,
So Dan myed up his mind te leave
An' walk the distance hyem;
He flung his bag across his back,
An' bid them a' gud neet,
Then hurried on as best he cud,
An' seun wes oot o' seet,—
A mile between the hoose an' him
He seun had put between,
But here's just where the fun begins,
A scene that's seldum seen.

Two pollis cummin bye that way,
Luckt hard an' queer at Dan,
Byeth on the watch for sum greet thief,
They teuk him for the man;
A pair o' bracelets on his wrists,
Afore poor Dan cud wink,
Wes thrust,—an' then they teuk his bag,
He haddint time te think,
Before they march'd him tiv a hoose
He'd nivor seen before,
An' then they threw him iv a cell,
An' then they lockt the door.

Poor Dan at forst wes stupefied,
For drink wes iv his heed,
But when he fund oot where he was,
His yells wad wake the deed;
The pollis byeth luckt iv his bag,
Wi' wide an' greedy eyes,
An' ivrything they fund, they thowt
Wes this greet thief's disguise,—
They waddint lissen te the words
He tried te myek them hear,
But thowt o' praise an' greet rewards
Next mornin they wad share.

The mornin com—the clerk wes there,
The pollis tell'd thor case,
Then browt Dan oot—wi' oaths he swore
He'd myek them tyek his place,
For when he tell'd them what he was,
They swore he tell'd a lee,
Until he drest an' sung a sang,
An' then they thowt it spree,
But Dan the spree he cuddint see
Until he myed them pay
Expensis—an' they had te did
Afore he'd gan away. [12]

The only 'famous concert man' that 'cud bring the hooses doon' in the north east had been Ned Corvan.

Prudence Binks, who had reportedly printed Corvan's songs in 1853, and Mrs Black, had had a shop at 64 Side in 1855, but in 1857 they were at 94 Side and Binks lived in Mount Pleasant. By 1859 Black ran the shop, but it was still known as Binks and Black in 1861.[13] Miss Binks had a 19-year-old female servant and a 43-year-old 'Confectioner' from Bolton was a lodger. In October 1866, when she was 'about 76', she was found dead in her bed at 8 Bell Street in Arthur's Hill. She had been 'an active helper to all missionary efforts' and supported the Newcastle Committee of the Anti-Slavery Association,[14] but left £76 to the Aged Female Society.[15]

In 1867 Thompson still chaired the Newcastle Oxford,[16] but he was also the landlord of the Adam and Eve Inn in Laygate Lane, South Shields.[17] In spring the 'comic' was at the Middlesbrough Oxford. The audience was 'not as good as was expected' when the Newcastle Oxford company were at the Wear in Sunderland, but Thompson was 'warmly applauded'.[18]

In June Isabella Corvan advertised her tent at Newcastle races in the *Shields Daily Gazette*.

FRIENDS of the late EDWARD CORVAN can be accommodated at the Tent No 29, Low Side, by his widow, ISABELLA CORVAN. [19]

Stanley closed the Tyne after it had attracted 1,316,247 customers at 1,619 performances, and advertised a new theatre.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—THE NEW TYNE THEATRE and OPERA HOUSE, WESTGATE.—(Sole Lessee and Manager, Mr. GEORGE STANLEY.)—This spacious and commodious building, the

LARGEST IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND,

now being erected by Messrs. J. and W. Lowry, Contractors, from Designs by W. Parnell, Esq., Architect, Collingwood Chambers, Newcastle, will Open in September for the Winter Season. The Auditorium is constructed on a novel and improved principle, and will accommodate nearly Three Thousand Persons. The Private and Dress Boxes, fitted in a *recherche* and elegant style, will contain Four Hundred Visitors; the Upper Circle, Three Hundred and Eighty; the Spacious Pit, One Thousand; and the Extensive Gallery, Eleven Hundred. From all parts of the Theatre a clear and unobstructed view of the Stage can be obtained, and particular attention has been given to the comfort and convenience of the audience. A First-class Company, including several Popular Newcastle Favourites, now being engaged; and no expense will be spared to secure the best available Talent. Special arrangements have been contracted with the principal Dramatic Writers of the day, whose productions will be placed on the Stage with every appliance conducive to the realisation of Modern Artistic Effects. The new and extensive Stage has been laid down with all the latest Mechanical Improvements by Mr. W. Day, of the Liverpool Theatres, and will afford ample scope for the full development of Scenic Display. The Beautiful Act-Drop and Scenery by those Talented Artists, Mr. Charles Fox and Mr. F. Browning. The Orchestra will be selected with the greatest possible care, and special attention will be directed to this important department. The Theatre will be brilliantly Lighted, the Gas Arrangements being under the superintendence of those able Engineers, J. Jones and Co., of Bow-street, Covent-garden.

First-class ARTISTES still REQUIRED. First Heavy Actor, Juvenile and Light Comedy Lady and Gentleman, Singing Chambermaid, and Leader of Orchestra. Only Ladies and Gentlemen of recognised position in First-class Theatres need apply. Address, GEORGE STANLEY, 45, Cumberland-row, Newcastle-on-Tyne; or E. DANVERS, Theatrical Agent, 36, Bow-street, Covent-garden, London. [20]

Venue proprietors sought to exercise stricter control over contracted artistes.

Edward ('Ned') Hammond had a good reputation as a 'Buffo' comic singer and had drawn large audiences, so Hugh Smith engaged him for the Victoria in Newcastle at £3 a week. Hammond wrote from Scarborough to say he was ill, but Smith advertised his appearance in May. Hammond did not turn up, Smith's audiences dwindled, and in July he claimed a loss of £30

in salaries and £100 in business, but a jury awarded him £5 damages.[21] Billy Thompson had to get Bagnall and Blakey's permission to perform at a benefit at the Royal Alhambra Music Hall in South Shields.[22]

The Tyne Theatre and Opera House was almost complete and Thomas Forster was the nominal owner. The eight private boxes and pit had 'distinct entrances' from Westgate Street, but the gallery entrance was in Thornton Street. Seats in the dress circle and upper circle were covered in scarlet 'American cloth', divided by arms and numbered. Seats in the pit, one of the largest in England, had backs, while those in the pit stalls had springs and were covered in scarlet cloth. The gallery was 'of vast dimensions' and its seats also had backs. The lighting was by gas and argon, while the stairs were slate and iron, and the passages were wide in case of fire. In September the magistrates granted Stanley a dramatic licence.[23] Newcastle was home to 20,000 Irish immigrants and the Tyne opened in the middle of a scare about 'Fenians', the Irish revolutionary nationalists who police claimed were drilling on Tyneside, and the play, Dion Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue* (*Arrah of the Kiss*) was about Irish revolutionaries in 1798,[24] but the hall was only 'tolerably well filled'. After the performance Stanley praised his 'very numerous, very able, and very respectable' company and thanked everyone involved, including the workers.[25] The last three years had been 'the worst the theatrical profession has experienced', and the previous year's 'commercial panic' had 'completely paralysed Theatricals',[26] but he praised the 'honest and intelligent artisans' who were his patrons.[27]

Adam Donald was landlord of the Crown and Thistle at 7 and 9 Groat Market,[28] but he died in spring 1868.[29] The *Newcastle Guardian* noted that Billy Thompson, 'facetiously termed "The Living Skeleton of the 19th Century"', was playing Friar Tuck in the Oxford pantomime. He sang 'curious songs' and was 'boisterously encored'. He was 'here, there, and everywhere, if not in the chair with his usual smile of welcome', then 'in front doing the "comical" with such Tyneside grins, and such terrible contortions of the face, that the audience takes up the matter, and the hall becomes almost converted into a theatre of grimace'. 'To those who have not seen "Slender William," we say go, and you will be more than satisfied'. He had his photograph taken, but it has not been traced. In summer the Oxford was 'crammed to suffocation' for his benefit and he was 'surrounded, on the stage, by about 200 of his immediate friends', who gave him a 'splendid silver salver'.[30]

In October John Balmbra died, aged 61,[31] and left his widow under £600. In December his former band leader, Charles Easthope, played for about 200 'sons and daughters of the best families in the district' at Monsieur D'Albert's annual ball in the Assembly Rooms.[32] Thompson had stopped writing his 'Awd Hewor' column for the *Gateshead Observer*,[33] and his last engagement was at Bagnall and Blakey's Music Hall in Station Bank, South Shields.[34] On Boxing Night he held a 'special levee' of 'eminent artistes' at the Newcastle Oxford and planned to play Old King Cole, but 'his cheeks had begun to fall in' and there was a 'weariness about the eyes'. It was his last appearance as chairman. In August 'professional friends and amateurs' gave him a benefit in Jarrow Concert Hall, but he died early in September,[35] and the *Shields Daily Gazette* published an obituary.

DEATH OF "BILLY THOMPSON," THE LOCAL COMEDIAN.—After a long and trying illness, Mr W. Thompson, more familiarly known to the inhabitants of Tyneside as "Billy Thompson," died at his residence in Gateshead, on Thursday. For the four years preceding his illness, Mr Thompson filled the chair at the Oxford Music Hall, and was greatly esteemed by all the patrons of that favourable amusement. His ever ready wit, and good natured, jovial disposition made him a great favourite with all who came within the circle of his acquaintance. We are informed that during his nine months' absence from the "Oxford" Messrs. Bagnall and Blakey—and to their honour be it recorded—have never ceased to forward him ample funds to meet all his necessary domestic expenses, and indeed paid him his full salary for a considerable portion of the time. From his boyhood "Billy" had a strong passion for comic acting. He was for some time connected with the famous Billy Purvis's company. Eventually he became possessed of a booth of his own, with which he travelled among the towns and villages of the North of England, and many who saw him perform at the time will know him best by the name of "Button-me-up." He wrote a number of local songs of considerable merit, and other poetical effusions. Deceased was also the author of the series of letters, written in the north country pit dialect, that appeared in the *Gateshead Observer* under the *nom de plume* of "A nawd Hewor."[36]

The Era obituary noted that Joe Wilson was one of the mourners

On Thursday evening, the 2d inst., this noted Newcastle worthy expired at his residence at Gateshead, after a protracted illness, at the age of fifty years. Mr. Thompson, when quite a young man, joined the company of strolling players, at that time headed by the famous "Billy Purvis;" and on the breaking up of that establishment he formed a company himself, and perambulated the Northern counties with varying success. When the Music Halls came so much into vogue, the deceased, having relinquished the sock and buskin, appeared frequently before the public as a vocalist, and for many years previous to his death he officiated as chairman at the Oxford Music Hall, a post which he filled with credit to himself and to all concerned, and his genial, good-humoured face, and his quick and ready-witted sayings, will be sadly missed by the *habitues* of the Oxford. Mr. Thompson's line was comedy, and his abilities as a delineator of North Country manners, and the dry and humorous style in which he sang his local songs, showed him to be a true *artiste*. He contributed a series of weekly letters to the *Gateshead Observer*, which were much appreciated. During his long and painful illness Messrs. Bagnall and Blakey, with a generosity which does them honour, provided everything that was necessary to soothe his affliction. The interment took place at All Saints' Cemetery, on Sunday, the 5th inst., in the presence of a large gathering of friends, amongst whom we noticed—Messrs. William Blakey, Joshua Bagnall, W. W. Blakey, Alfred Gorringe, J. Beers, Joe Wilson, T. Wilson, John Bent, John Ireland, T. Holmes, F. Wallingford, F. Albert, E. D. Davies, &c.[37]

William Henderson Dawson noted in the *Newcastle Guardian* that Thompson's 'state of obesity' was 'not the growth of a year'.[38] Bagnall and Blakey subsequently bought the Victoria Rooms, made alterations and installed new seating.[39]

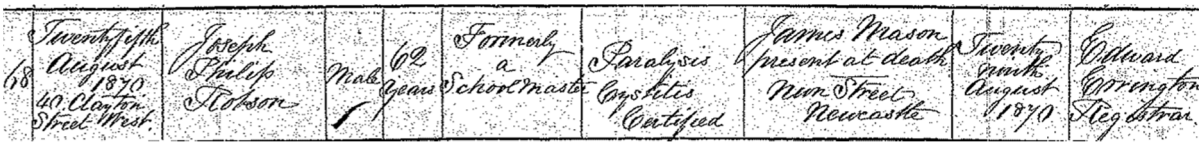
Six years earlier 23-year-old Robert William Robson, Isabella and J.P.'s youngest son, had 'lost his life in attempting to save a shipmate on the *Indomitable* from drowing in the China Seas.[40] In 1866 28-year-old John Bergna Robson, a 'versatile *comique* and pianist', died of 'consumption' at his parents' home at 40 Clayton Street, leaving a young widow and three children. He was the last of the Robsons' six children.[41] J.P. Robson wrote the 'letters' from 'A Retiort Keelman' in the *North of England*

Advertiser,[42] Robert Ward's weekly paper, which had a circulation of 11,000,[43] but in January 1869 John Scarlett saw a 'somewhat attenuated man in rusty black, with a red visage and snow white hair' who 'looked a very commonplace individual indeed, but was often to be seen in Chater's shop'. The *Newcastle Courant* warmly reviewed Chater's *Keelmin's Comic Annewal* and the Burns Club drank Robson's health,[44] but by September his paralysis was 'excruciating'. Dawson published a sentimental encomium on the 'Tyneside Poet' in the *Jarrow Chronicle*, but noted that his local songs were not as popular as they had been,[45] and the paper advertised a sketch of the 'local poet' with a supplement of 50 columns in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.[46] Late that year Robson won third prize in Chater's song competition, but by spring 1870 he had lost the use of his left arm and hand. John Carr published his *Evangeline: or, The Spirit of Progress* in Newcastle, and the *Courant* reviewed it at length.[47]

Late in August the *Newcastle Daily Telegraph* reported that the Oxford was 'crowded in every part' and 'numbers had to avail themselves of the opportunity of witnessing the performance by standing behind the wing on the stage'.

> Great credit is due to 'Oxford Joe', the indefatigable stage manager, for the order and precision in which everything passed off, fact, the arrangements passed off as smoothly as marriage bell. A better stage manager, we venture to affirm, cannot found in the provinces than the one now executing, the duties of that office in the person of Mr. Joseph Carlisle. … Truly, the problem is solved as to why this place of amusement should be so well patronised and become a 'Household Word' … [plus] the best of talent which the spirited and respected proprietors constantly engage, to please and delight their patrons and the public. It would be well if other lessees would follow the example of Messrs Bagnall and Blakey. In doing so, their houses would be crowded nightly the same as the case with the Oxford.[48]

Next day Robson died in Nunn Street, probably as a result of complications arising from a urinary infection.



He was buried in Jesmond Old Cemetery.[49]

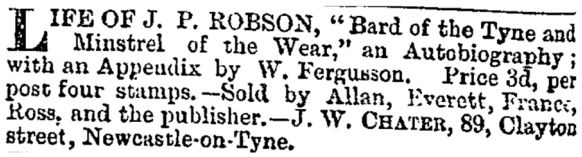
The *Newcastle Chronicle*'s patronising obituary reappeared in the *Alnwick Mercury*.

> Mr Robson possessed considerable literary ability. He wrote verses pleasantly, and with a certain amount of finish and feeling. But none of his poetic productions evinced much power or originality. He was best known for his writings in the dialect of Tyneside, although these were certainly not the best things he wrote. What he wrote was not the pure Northumberland dialect of 'Brockett's Glossary', of the late Thomas Wilson's 'Pitman's Pay', 'My Lord Size', and other popular songs and poems, but a curious jumble of slang phrases and bad Scotch, may appear clever to some people to write of Bright as 'Jack' Bright, or of the Prime Minister as 'Bill' Gladstone. There is little merit such phraseology, and it seems somewhat vulgar. Certain it is that such languages was never used by our earlier and most popular local poets—men like the late Mr Wilson, Mr Shield, and others.[50]

The *Newcastle Courant* noted that influential people were organising to provide Isabella Robson with an annuity and there was a fund-raising concert in Nelson Street Music Hall,[51] where Joe Wilson was one of the performers.[52] Robson's friends subsequently purchased the grave plot, erected a stone and gave his widow £40.[53]

Around this time the North Eastern Railway built offices at 1 Neville Street.[54] The *Newcastle Guardian* noted that the 'enterprising management' of the Oxford was 'meeting with that amount of success to which it is so richly entitled', and Bagnall and Blakey advertised that a train left Central Station for Heaton, Byker, Wallsend, Howdon, Percy Main, North Shields, Tynemouth, and South Shields by Ferry at 11.30pm, half an hour after the show ended.[55]

In spring 1871 a biography of Robson was advertised in the *Courant*.


LIFE OF J. P. ROBSON, "Bard of the Tyne and Minstrel of the Wear," an Autobiography; with an Appendix by W. Fergusson. Price 3d, per post four stamps.—Sold by Allan, Everett, France, Ross, and the publisher.—J. W. CHATER, 89, Clayton street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. [56]

Chater took the opportunity to advertise his 'Superior Mourning Cards' on the back page.[57]

The previous November 38-year-old Thomas Allan had married 20-year-old Annie, the daughter of Edward Armstrong of Newcastle.[58] Her family came from Talkin Head in Cumbria and some were solicitors.[59] In April 1871 the 'Bookseller' and his wife lived at 14 and 15 Alexandra Place in Sandyford, with Annie's 29-year-old unmarried sister, Elizabeth Armstrong.[60] At number 17 Elizabeth, George and William Allan lived with Nicholas, who they regarded as 'mentally retarded'. Ralph and Ann Allan lived in Jackson Street, North Shields, with the 16-year-old 'Apprentice', Ralph junior, 12-year-old Samuel, two-year-old Alice and one-month-old Isabella. After William Allan married, he and 20-year-old Mary Elizabeth moved to Middlesbrough.[61]

The widow Isabella Corvan was a 'Washer Woman' and lived at 10 Cornwallis Street, Westoe, South Shields, with 16-year-old Isabella junior, Edward, a ten-year-old a 'Scholar', and three lodgers, a 43-year-old 'Glassmaker' born in South Shields, a 25-year-old 'Black Smith' born in Walker and a 21-year-old 'Brick Layer' born in Norfolk. Once again, Mary Jane Corvan was evidently elsewhere.

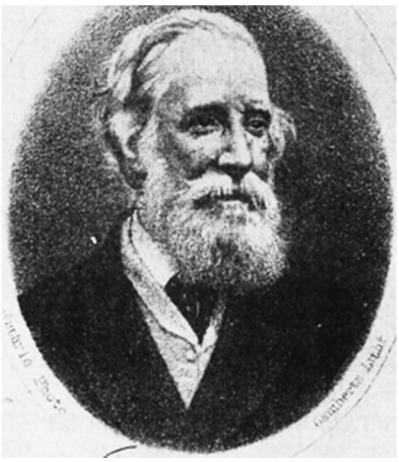
Early in 1872 Edward Corvan was in trouble.

THE RAID UPON A MILL DAM FRUIT SHOP.—Yesterday, at the South Shields Police Court, before the Mayor and James Young, Esq., eight boys, named respectively John Langley, Academy Hill; Philip Goggans, Academy Hill; William Scott, Payne's Bank; John Beck, Academy Hill; Thomas Elstob, Tyne Street; William Walker, Nelson's Bank; Edward Corvan, Wallis Street, and Martin Hall, Academy Hill, were charged with breaking into the shop of William Plumb, Mill Dam, and stealing therefrom a quantity of oranges, figs, &c., on the 11th inst. The boys, as previously reported, broke into the shop on Sunday, while it was shut up for the day. The defendants were each sent to prison for fourteen days, with the exception of Corvan and Goggans, who were ordered to be sent to the Wellesley. 62

HMS *Wellesley* had been a 74-gun third-rate wooden warship, named after the Duke of Wellington and launched in 1815; but in 1859 the London School Ship Society had it certified as a reformatory for boys and renamed it the *Cornwall*.[63] In 1868 a group of Tyneside businessmen, led by James Hall, a Tynemouth JP, established a Training Ship Institution for boys who 'through poverty, parental neglect, or being orphans,' or 'left destitute and homeless, and in danger of contamination with vice and crime', could train for 'a sea-faring life'. The London Society offered the *Cornwall*, which sailed to the Tyne and was renamed the *Wellesley*.[64] In March 1872, when Edward Corvan was on board, his sister 'Bella' performed at a tea for 800 members of St. Hilda and Harton branches of the Northumberland and Durham Permanent Relief Fund in South Shields.[65]

Rowland Harrison was a concert hall singer-songwriter and also 'beer-retailer' at the Rolling Mills Arms in Hopper Street, Gateshead,[66] where John Taylor painted local entertainers, and a grainy photograph appeared in a newspaper years later.

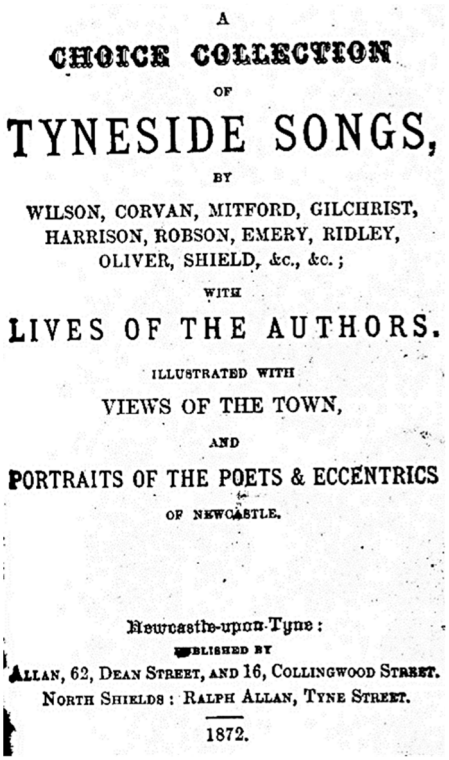
William Wheeler, a blind singer, is on the left, next to Joe Wilson with a baby on his knee, Billy Thompson, Ned Corvan, Rowley Harrison, George Ridley, Billy Purvis and Elizabeth Harrison. Four of the performers were dead. The late J.P. Robson was reportedly in the original painting,[67] and Taylor had reversed a photograph of him to make a sketch.



68

69

Thomas Allan had published what he called 'Old Tyneside Songs' in 24 penny numbers and four sixpenny parts. They included 'a good number of Ned Corvan's effusions, the copyright having been purchased from the writer'.[70] In October Allan had the numbers bound as a book, but Corvan was now second to Joe Wilson on the title page (as he was on the 1873 edition).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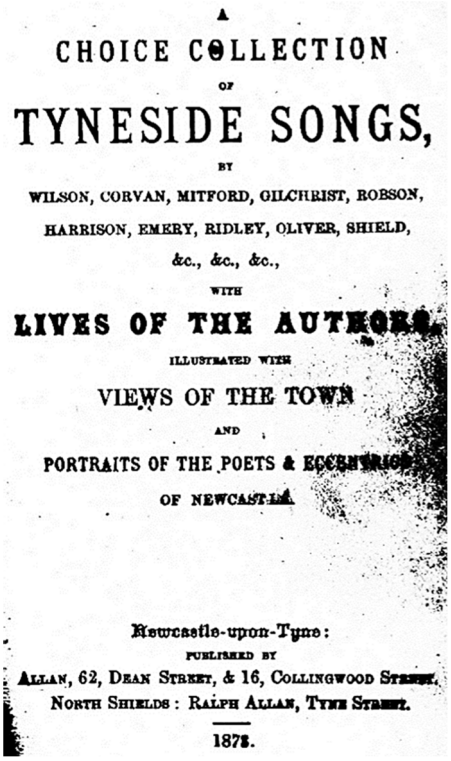
HARRISON, ROBSON, EMERY, RIDLEY,
OLIVER, SHIELD, &c., &c.;
WITH
LIVES OF THE AUTHORS.
ILLUSTRATED WITH
VIEWS OF THE TOWN,
AND
PORTRAITS OF THE POETS & ECCENTRICS
OF NEWCASTLE.
Newcastle-upon-Tyne:
PUBLISHED BY
ALLAN, 62, DEAN STREET, AND 16, COLLINGWOOD STREET.
NORTH SHIELDS: RALPH ALLAN, TYNE STREET.
1872.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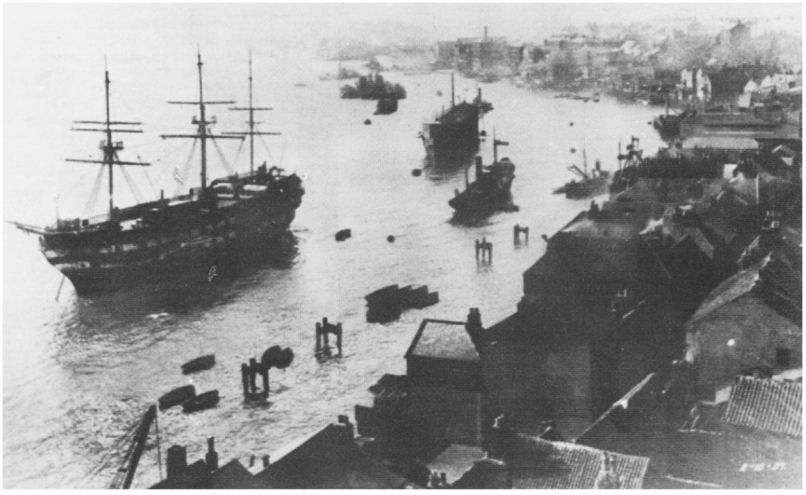
NORTH SHIELDS: RALPH ALLAN, TYNE STREET.
1873.

There were 12 preliminary pages, an Index and 372 pages of songs. There was no page 181, but there were two one-page biographies between pages 16 and 17, though Allan claimed Corvan had been born in the Stockbridge, Newcastle, in 1829. The six ten-year-old 16-page 'numbers' contained the same 19 Corvan songs as previous editions, but the rest included *Asstrilly; or, Pitman's Farewell*, *Deeth o' Billy Purvis, He wad be a Noodle* (without the final patter), *The Keel on Fire*, *Soup Kitchen*, *The Stage-Struck Keelman* (lacking half the first verse), *Tommy Carr's Adventures in Astrilly*, *The Toon Improvement Bill* (with an altered chorus) and *Warkworth Feast*, while the 1873 edition omitted the first verse of Corvan's *Wor Tyneside Champions*.

The *Wellesley* was supposed to accommodate 200 boys aged 12 to 16,[71] but there were 240 on board, and the Admiralty provided the 74-gun wooden warship *Boscawen*, built at Woolwich in 1844 and paid off in 1860. She was taken to the Tyne, renamed the *Wellesley* and after £4,000 had been spent on refitting the 'dismantled hulk' it was licensed to hold 300.[72] Sixty more as young as seven remained on shore until they were 12 and would then be transferred to the ship.[73] The boys had to get up at 6.00am and lights went out at 10.30pm. They had a 'sound elementary education', but the school room was 43 by 47 feet and held 100. They were trained to use rifles and cutlasses and 'discharged when they reached 16, having learned several practical skills, including sail making,[74] the trade Edward Corvan's father had run away from 25 years or so earlier, and the ship was moored just off North Shields, yards from where Edward's parents had begun their married life.


75

In 1873 William Lawson included an uncritical biography of J.P. Robson in the 'Miscellanea' section of his *Tyneside Celebrities*,[76] but he ignored Ned Corvan, George Ridley and Joe Wilson.

In summer 1874 Allan's second edition of *Joe Wilson's Tyneside Songs and Drolleries* included an acrostic on Corvan.

C omic iv iv'rything – clivor at owt,
O v a' the professions, – stickin at nowt,
R eal witty! as poet an' singer at hyem,

V ersatile artiste wes Corvan's reet nyem,
A s painter, fiddler, comedian, cloon,
N ed was the maister ov all i' the toon.

Wilson set *The Musical Landlord's Fareweel* to the tune of *The Whole Hog or None*

FAREWEEL, maw kind Newcassel frinds, aw's gannin far away,
Aw's gan te leeve the canny toon, an' prood am aw te say
Aw've myed me fortun i' the hoose where ye've spent mony a neet,
Aw's gan te turn professor an' a teacher tee complete.

Korus.

Bruther fiddlers a', like me, myek lots o' money,
Aw's gannin doon te Sheels,
Te teach an' play cudreels,
An' aw'll let them see the tallint thor cums frae the canny toon.

Fareweel, maw country patrons, for ne mair ye'll hear us play
"O, Nanny, wilt thou gan wi' me?" wi' canny "Aud Robin Gray;"
Ne mair ye'll hear the "Blue Bells" soond, that often pleased ye weel,
Or imadgin that i' "Corn Rigs" hoo delighted ye wad feel.

Fareweel, maw cat-gut scrapin frinds, aw hevint time te stay,
As the *minnits* are depairtin fast, play *seconds* while ye may;
Ye'll miss yor leader, lang wi' me yor tallints ye've display'd,
An' bonny teuns an' pleasin' soonds tiv eager ears convey'd.

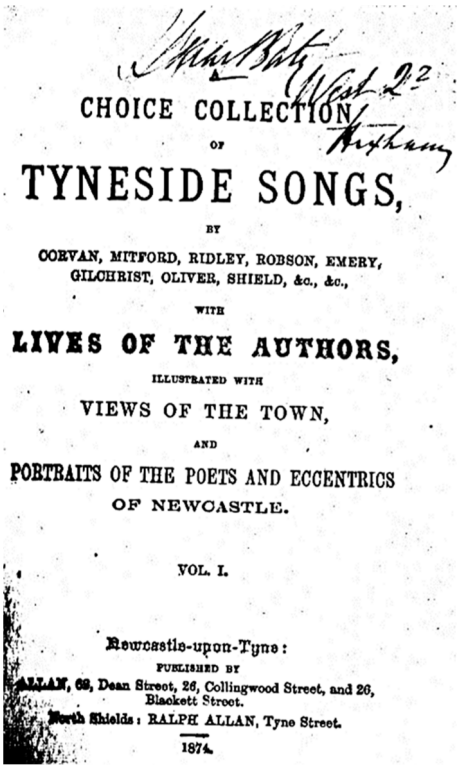
Solos se high aw've often play'd an' charm'd ye wiv each note,
But if ye want te hear us still, cum doon i' train or boat,
An' there ye'll see the young foaks dance, as teacher aw'll appear,
An' fiddlin' thraw me legs aboot like harlekin se queer.

Fareweel, me frinds, hoo sad aw feel te say the last gud-bye,
Hoo often when aw leeve ye ye'll imadgin that yor dry,
An' aw'll not be near te cheer ye wi' beer, an' jige, an reels;
But lads, aw'll often think o' ye when aw gan doon te Sheels.

77

This was surely a tribute to Corvan.

In October Thomas Allan reduced the 'Strongly-bound' and 'most complete collection of old favourite Tyneside Songs in print', from 4s to 3s 4d.[78] Ralph moved to Church Way in North Shields, and they published a two-volume songbook.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VOL. I.
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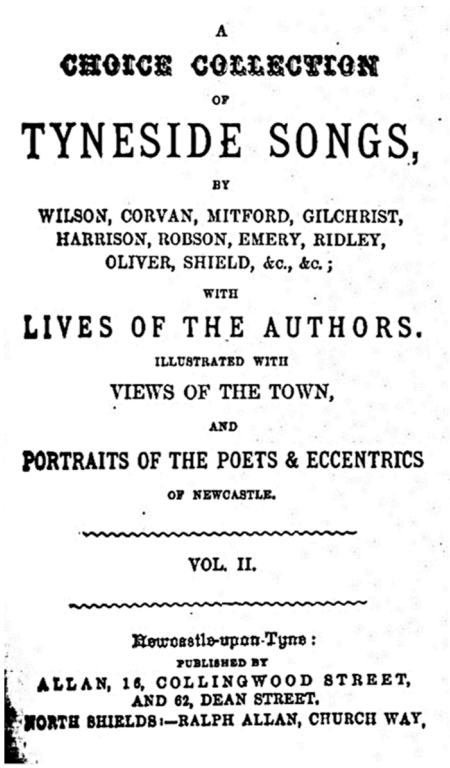
PUBLISHED BY
ALLAN, 68, Dean Street, 26, Collingwood Street, and 26, Blackett Street.
North Shields: RALPH ALLAN, Tyne Street.
1874.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PUBLISHED BY
ALLAN, 16, COLLINGWOOD STREET,
AND 62, DEAN STREET,
NORTH SHIELDS:—RALPH ALLAN, CHURCH WAY.

What had been the first, fourth, fifth and sixth 16-page numbers in Volume I were re-set, and there were also six 14-page numbers, while Volume II included six 32-page numbers. The two volumes, with an Index, cost 4s.[79]

Nine year earlier Stuart Henry Bell had leased Hartlepool Theatre Royal, which held 1,800. In 1869 *The Era* noted that his Royal Wear Music Hall in Sunderland was 'well patronised',[80] and Bell's playbills boasted the 'best artists in the world', 'regardless of expense'. In 1871 the Bells lived at 22 Peel Park, Sunderland, and by 1873 they had a carriage and pair and a coachman. In 1874 'the Sisters Corvan (daughters of the late Ned Corvan, the Tyneside vocalist)' drew 'crowded houses at the Wear',[81] and in spring Bell re-engaged the 'Tyneside vocalists and dancers' before they went on to be 'warmly received' in the Alexandrovna Concert Hall in Middlesbrough, [82] which was probably named after Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna, the Russian tsar's daughter who had recently married Prince Alfred. In summer over 3,000 people attended the opening of Samuel Broadbent Siddall's New Alhambra Music Hall and Amphitheatre in Mill Dam, South Shields,[83] but late that year Bell advertised that the New Wear was 'THE LARGEST AND MOST MAGNIFICENT HALL IN EUROPE. ACCOMMODATION FOR 4,000 PERSONS'.[84] In spring 1875 prices ranged from 3d to £1 1s and his 'Colossal New Company' included 'Bella Corvan (Characteristic)'. Bell announced that 'All Engagements' were 'concluded for 1875'.

In spring 1876 a very large audience at the Popular Readings in Coldstream Mechanics' Hall heard Mr J. Donelly sing a 'comic song', *The Fisherman hung the Monkey*.[85] In summer 'Miss BELLA CORVAN, Vocalist' was at the Gaiety Theatre,[86] in Chambers Street, Edinburgh, which Mr. G.J. Cravelli managed for the Hall Company Limited, and her 'serio-comic effusions' were 'in capital style'.[87] In autumn Bell gave a benefit for striking Sunderland glassmakers at the Wear.[88] He no longer ran the Lyceum Theatre in Lambton Street, but the Wear attracted large audiences.[89] The *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*'s 'Local Songs and Song-Writers' series hailed Corvan as 'one of the best', and claimed that *Billy Purvis Turn'd Ranter Preacher*, *The High Level an' the Aud Bridge*, *Tom Johnson* and other songs would 'always find a place in local collections', but it also credited him with Emery's *The Curds and Cream-House Ghost* and Bagnall's verses of *Yer Gannin to be a Keelman*.[90]

Bagnall and Blakey had redecorated the Victoria in Newcastle and erected a new proscenium, but the hall was no longer in use by 1877,[91] and 'Miss B. CORVAN (daughter of the late Ned Corvan)' was a 'Ballad Descriptive Vocalist' at the Oxford.[92] She later appeared at the Wear in Sunderland and at the Alhambra in Belfast in 1878.[93] In 1879 *Oot of Wark* and *Sma' Coals* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, but the latter had footnotes.[94] An 'entirely new company' at the Wear in Sunderland included 'Miss Bella Corvan, vocalist'. Bell gave a benefit for Ryhope miners and subsequently re-engaged her,[95] and her 22-year-old sister, Mary Jane, who had married the railway engine cleaner John George Errington in St. Mary's Church, Gateshead. In spring 1880 *The Comet* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.[96] In summer Bella Corvan, the 'Tyneside vocalist', 'fairly captivated the natives' at the Star Theatre in Barrow,[97] and at some point she had her photograph taken.

98

The Lyceum in Sunderland burned down that summer.[99] In October George Duncan, the 'most Legitimate and true Pourtrayor of Tyneside Comedy', was at Mr J.H. Milburn's Theatre of Varieties in Sunderland, and hailed as 'the modern Ned Corvan'.[100] After the prime minister gave the pitman poet Joseph Skipsey a pension, the *Newcastle Courant* recalled J.P. Robson's 'paltry gratuity', but acknowledged that much of his work was forgotten and praised Corvan for being 'racey of the soil, of the Tyne, Tyney'.[101] His *Jimmy McKenny* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* with a note: 'Of Ned Corvan it is unnecessary to say much. As a writer and singer of Tyneside Song he holds an undisputed preeminence. In many respects he betrays much of the whimsical talent which distinguished Billy Purvis'.[102] His fame seemed assured.

16. Thy sympathies were keen and strong

In January 1881 Mr Jennings ended a Saturday concert in Middlesbrough with Ned Corvan's *The Fisherman Hung the Monkey*.[1] In February 'Miss Bella Corvan (serio-comic and dancer)' was at the Clarence Concert Hall in Rotherham,[2] and in spring the 26-year-old 'Professional Singer' was lodging at Benjamin Merchant's pub at 16 Bank Street in Halifax. Her 23-year-old sister Mary Jane Errington and her husband lived with Isabella Corvan, a 51-year-old 'windower', and her son Edward, a 20-year-old 'Cabinet-Maker and French Polisher', at 15 Croft Street, All Saints, Newcastle. In summer the donkey 'Who Hung the Monkey' ran in the Grand Donkey Derby Stakes at Stockton's Statute Cherry Fair.[3] In Newcastle the Wheat Sheaf licensee, Mary Bell Barlow, had assets of £1 but debts of £300, and appeared in the Bankruptcy Court in September.[4] In December *The Stage* noted that Bella Corvan and the company at the Victoria in Newcastle had 'met with a flattering reception from the *habituées* of this comfortable music-hall',[5] and *The Era* subsequently reported that the 'capital company' at the Oxford included 'Miss Bella Corvan (serio-comic)',[6] where the stage was five feet deep.[7]

Early in 1882 large audiences were 'the order of the day' at the Wear in Sunderland,[8] but the police found the 'musical conductor', a 'negro comedian', a 'bill-sticker' and a soldier at the Keen's Head next door during prohibited hours. Two others 'made off', but the police saw the soldier pay 1s for a bottle of whisky. In court he insisted it had been paid for previously,[9] but the magistrates fined them all 5s and costs. Stuart Henry Bell had not been on the premises, but they fined him £3 and costs.

John Stokoe, a middle-class amateur musician, described James Hill in the *Newcastle Courant* as 'a popular fiddler, well known in Newcastle'. He was 'amongst the professional musicians who are content to perform at the merry-makings of the humbler classes', but 'had no superior and indeed no rival', and was the 'Paganini of hornpipe players'.

> Hill had a powerful tone and capital bow arm, and his performance of such melodies as 'Auld Robin Gray' or 'Roslin Castle' was marked by a delicacy and expression which would not have disgraced a violinist of the first rank, whilst as a player of dance music he was unapproachable for power, vivacity and correct intonation. His favourite habitat was the Hawk Inn, Gateshead, where he could be heard on Saturdays playing to an enthusiastic audience of pitmen and others with untiring energy for hours together. His abilities were to a large extent wasted upon such audiences as he chose to play to, and it is a matter of regret that his fondness for taproom company and lack of ambition should have acted as a bar to his promotion to a position better suited to his undoubted abilities. Hill was a prolific composer of dance tunes, principally hornpipes, in which he displayed great genius. Many of them still retain their popularity.

Stokoe published some of Hill's tunes.[10]

Corvan's *Yer Gannin to be a Keelman* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, followed by *The Deeth O' Cuckoo Jack*.[11] In Sunderland Bell offered to lease the Wear's 'refreshment bar' at 'a fair valuation',[12] but lost his licence for the Keen's Head.[13]

In Newcastle the road above Pandon was 'reconstructed, levelled and extended' to Pilgrim Street and named City Road. Many old buildings, part of the Town Wall,[14] and Craig's Alley were demolished. What remained of Coburg Stairs, Ned Corvan's early home, was behind the end of the Stockbridge to the right.

[15]

Bella Corvan lived not far away.

In 1839 25-year-old Thomas Wilkes married 30-year-old Mary Ann Ellis, who had been born in Herefordshire. In 1841 they lived in Market Street, Hexham, with a 64-year-old 'Maltster' as a lodger, and Samuel was born in 1843. In 1882 he married 28–year-old Bella Corvan and in 1883 she was a 'shopkeeper' at 15 Croft Street, All Saints, Newcastle, and she and Samuel lived with her brother Edward. In May *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.[16]

In summer there was a children's show in Sunderland's Victoria Hall. The organisers threw gifts into the stalls and announced that those with certain numbered tickets would get a prize. Many of the 1,050 or so children in the gallery ran down the stairs, but a man had bolted the door at the bottom, to let one through at a time. It opened inwardly and over 180

children were crushed to death or asphyxiated. The doorman was never identified and the proprietor got off with a censure.[17] Bell thought a benefit would open parents 'mental wounds', but he donated £21 to the relief fund.[18]

In Newcastle the Oxford was now a showroom,[19] but four policemen testified that Patrick McGee, the Wheat Sheaf licensee, allowed betting on the premises.

> Sergeant J. W. Lowes said that he and others entered the defendant's house on the 23rd of May, under the authority of a warrant. He saw Lawrence Joyce extend his hand over the counter, and heard something drop. The barman stooped as if to pick something up, and threw it under the counter. He said, 'You must give that to me', and the barman gave it to him. It was a betting book, in which he found the names of the two barmen and of the landlord.
>
> Superintendent Anderson and Superintendent Beattie also gave evidence. The latter said that the defendant was a foreman for Mr McAnulty, and that probably would account for his being a great deal out of the bar.
>
> Mr Bruce then contended that on the only occasion when the landlord had been seen on the premises by the witnesses the house was being conducted properly. Whenever a betting had been going on the landlord was not present, and the defendant was not responsible for the acts of his servants in a criminal case. The word used in the Act was 'suffer', and they could not suffer a thing to take place unless he did it knowingly. The fact of the name McGee appearing in the book found proved nothing, and it was not a shown that he knowingly permitted betting.
>
> … Mr Hodgkin said that the magistrates found that the defendant had, in the meaning of the Act, suffered his house to be used as a betting house, and they, therefore, inflicted a fine of £10 and £11 1s costs. In this case they would not endorse the license, but defendant must be careful in future…
>
> … Lawrence Joyce, Robert Henderson, Thomas Kelly, and William Ward were charged with using the Wheat Sheaf Inn, Bigg Market, for the purposes of betting. They were … able to choose whether or not they would be tried by a jury, and they chose that form of trial.

In September the Police Court dealt with 'licenses objected to by the temperance party', and Superintendent Beattie objected to renewing McGee's licence, but the magistrates disagreed. In October the *Newcastle Courant* recalled 'the tricks' of Ralph Little, a watchmen who had transferred to the police force half a century earlier, and quoted Corvan's *The Fire on the Kee*. 'They say Ralphy L--tle's broke his legs, but that myeks little matter, / 'Cause a glass o' brandy 'll put him reet, wiv a bottle o' soda water'.[20] In December Corvan's *The Goose Club* appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.[21] In Sunderland Bell advertised his 21st Christmas show at the New Wear in *The Era* and lashed out at a magistrate who called him 'one-eyed'.

Mr STUART HENRY BELL,
that One-eyed Man,
Vide STUMP SPEECH, at Temperance Meeting,
Saturday Night, November 17th, 1883, by an
AMAZING SUNDERLAND MAGISTRATE,
Mr ROBERT CAMERON, J.P.

N.B.—I am not responsible for the affliction received in my youth, in 1851, by the Superior Being, which was caused (Dr. R. Britton, of Chester) by a perishment of cold while making Drawings of the Celebrated Old Houses in the City of Chester, upon which I was engaged, and had to resign.

The Great Unpaid Mr Robert Cameron is in the same predicament, not responsible for that ball on his shoulders which is usually designed a head.

A Stranger would naturally imagine the above to be "a Squib." That any man possessing his Mental Faculties Unimpaired should ridicule at a Public Temperance Meeting the infirmity of one of God's afflicted creatures is beyond belief. A Teacher of Youth, a Religious Moralist, and occasionally a Preacher, a Town Councillor, and, save the mark, "a Magistrate."

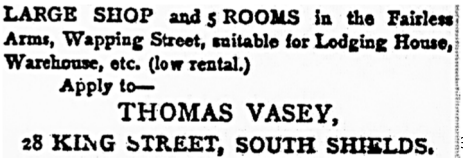
Oh! Shame. Where is Thy Blush?

Answer—Upon the countenance of the Lord Chancellor, who elected such a Dogberry to sit with Gentlemen as a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Sunderland.[22]

Cameron was a Liberal, and denied he had insulted Bell, though he was 'in a business that was demoralising youth'. Days later Martha Bell died at home at 20 Peel Street. In 1884 Bell auctioned his carriage and pair and advertised 'Temperance refreshments of the Best Quality that money can procure' at his Theatre Tavern in Lambton Street, Bishopwearmouth. Late that year the *Sunderland Daily Echo* reported that 'a troupe of female Christy Minstrels' had a disappointing audience in Fawcett-street Assembly Rooms, even though most had 'sweet and flexible voices', and the programme included 'ballads and comic songs' by Miss Corvan. In 1885 Bell was a candidate for Bishopwearmouth Poor Law Guardians and won 229 votes, but was well behind the Liberals. In summer he advertised his 'Alexandra grand new CIRCUS' in Hudson Road,[23] and asked 'VARIETY ARTISTES' to send their 'lowest terms'.[24] His home was available for let and much of its contents, including his books and pictures, which were up for auction, since the Licensing Act obliged him to live at the Theatre Tavern.[25]

In 1886 Edward Corvan lived at 15 Croft Street, All Saints, Newcastle, with his sister Bella Wilkes, who appeared in the directory as 'Isabella Corvan', 'shopkeeper'.[26] George Charlton Barron, a Quayside clerk born in Gateshead, had become a commercial traveller,[27] and gave a 'Selection from Neddy Corvan' at a Grand Concert in the Free Library in Ocean Road, South Shields, and a room at the Fairless Arms was available for 1s a week.[28] In Sunderland Bell's Alexandra Amphitheatre was available for let as a 'Circus or Music Hall', but Bell subsequently leased the Theatre Royal.[29] In 1887 there was a 'fairly large audience' at his benefit in Fawcett Street Assembly Rooms. Some venue proprietors let contracted artistes perform, but 'a couple of "stars"' failed to show up.[30] Bell invested a 'considerable amount of capital' in the Tyne Music Hall and Opera House,[31] in Coronation Street, South Shields, which had belonged to Siddall. There was a 'crowded house' on the opening night, but the floor of a pit exit gave way. About 20 people fell over six feet and several were severely injured,[32] but the show continued.[33] In Cullercoats Barron, who was 'one of the chief entertainers of the district', had his 'Reminiscences of Ned Corvan' 'loudly

encored', and 1888 Mr Rea sang *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!* at the Volunteer Life Brigade's annual supper in St. George's Hall. In South Shields a sizeable part of the Fairless Arms was available to let.

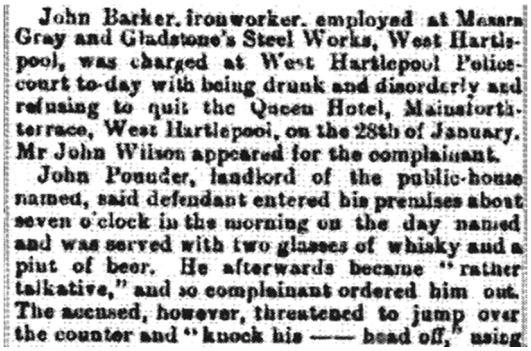

LARGE SHOP and 5 ROOMS in the Fairless Arms, Wapping Street, suitable for Lodging House, Warehouse, etc. (low rental.)
Apply to—
THOMAS VASEY,
28 KING STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS.
[34]

In autumn, 'owing to the great success he achieved at South Shields, particularly by his rendering of the celebrated Ned Corvan's Songs, Mr Rowland Harrison, Tyneside comedian, was engaged for six nights only' at the Royal Variety Theatre in Sunderland with the star Vesta Tilley, and they were 'exceedingly well received'.[35] Late that year a West Hartlepool football club supporter thought the Durham spectators were 'frightfully one-sided' when 'our men had to play under epithets such as "Who hung the monkey"'. In 1889, as Rovers supporters walked from Durham station, a 'bevy' of children asked the same question. In West Hartlepool upwards of 700 people sat down to tea at the Amalgamated Society Railway Servants' annual meeting in the Athenaeum, and a waxwork figure of 'The Fisherman who Hung the Monkey' gave 'every satisfaction'.[36]

In spring 1889 Bella and Samuel Wilkes lived at 14 Croft Street, All Saints, Newcastle, with Bella's brother Edward.[37] In summer James Spiers was engaged at the Oddfellows' Hall in Halifax.[38] South Shields Boarding-House Keepers were notified that all the 'Large and Convenient HOUSE, called the "Fairless Arms"', opposite Crosthwaite's Brewery, and 'containing 18 Rooms and every convenience', was available for let at a 'moderate' rent.[39] In Tynemouth the 'inimitable' Barron was 'great' in his reminiscences of Corvan at a men-only 'smoker'.[40] In Newcastle, Christopher Barrass, the new landlord of the Wheat Sheaf Inn, pleaded guilty to permitting gaming and was fined £10 and costs. At the September Brewster Sessions the police objected and the magistrates refused to renew his licence.[41] The 'final device' in a Hartlepool fireworks display was a monkey 'suspended by its tail in mid-air under letters of vari-coloured wire inquiring who hung' it. 'Every trueborn Heugher was promptly up in arms, while several sections the crowd re-echoed the question. But good humour once again became general'.[42] Thereafter Hartlepool Rovers players hung a toy monkey from their crossbar at away matches.[43]

The second volume of *North Country Poets*, edited by William Andrews, Secretary the Hull Literary Club, was published in London. William Weaver Tomlinson, a North Eastern Railway accountant, claimed that it 'was not until the advent' of J.P. Robson 'that the reading world knew anything of the humour and pathos concealed in the heart of Tyneside'. *The Auld Wife's Plant*, *The Wail o' the Fallen* and *The Tyne Exile's Lament* appeared 'by the kind permission of Messrs. Allan of Newcastle' and John Fraser of Blyth, 'the owners of the copyright'.[44] The *Shields Daily Gazette* noted that the book 'cannot fail to be of interest to 'natives and residents of this north country'.[45]

In Hartlepool the question 'Who hung the monkey' caused a fight.

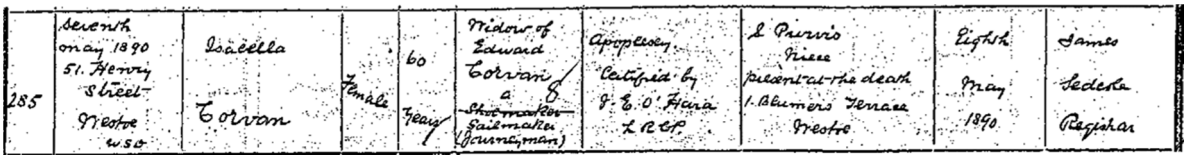

John Barker, ironworker, employed at Messrs Gray and Gladstone's Steel Works, West Hartlepool, was charged at West Hartlepool Police-court to-day with being drunk and disorderly and refusing to quit the Queen Hotel, Mainsforth-terrace, West Hartlepool, on the 28th of January. Mr John Wilson appeared for the complainant.

John Pounder, landlord of the public-house named, said defendant entered his premises about seven o'clock in the morning on the day named and was served with two glasses of whisky and a pint of beer. He afterwards became "rather talkative," and so complainant ordered him out. The accused, however, threatened to jump over the counter and "knock his —— head off," using the counter and "knock his —— head off," using most insolent language.

Two young women, named Dunn and Gateaby, employed at the hotel, corroborated the evidence.

Defendant, who was also sworn, admitted having two pints of beer and only one glass of whisky on the day named. The bother commenced simply because he asked the landlord "Who hung the monkey?" (Laughter.) He, in company with several other friends, were only joking at the time, but Mr Pound—— or rather John Pounder—(laughter)—did not like it, and so he ordered them out. (Laughter.)—Defendant was fined 5s and 11s costs, or ten days.
[46]

In spring 1890 E.D. Archbold M.A. lectured on 'Edison's latest Phonograph' at the Tyne Theatre and Opera House in Newcastle. He played wax cylinders of songs and music,[47] and recorded someone singing Corvan's *The High Level and the Aud Bridge*. Archbold later took the recording to 'distant parts' so that 'many a Tynesider' in 'Australia, the Cape, and other English colonies' could 'have old memories stirred as they listen to the familiar dialogue'.[48] In May Isabella Corvan, the widow of the 'well-known Tyneside comedian, vocalist, and poet', died at her brother-in-law's house in Westoe.[49] The registrar recorded her age as 60, when she was a year or two older, and described her late husband as a 'Shoemaker', but crossed that out and wrote 'Sailmaker (Journeyman)'.


285	Seventh May 1890 51 Henry Street Westoe W.S.O.	Isabella Corvan	Female	60 Years	Widow of Edward Corvan / a Shoemaker Sailmaker (Journeyman)	Apoplexy Certified by J. E. O'Hara L.R.C.P.	2 Previous Present at the death 1 Albemarle Terrace Westoe	Eighth May 1890	James Sedgefield Registrar

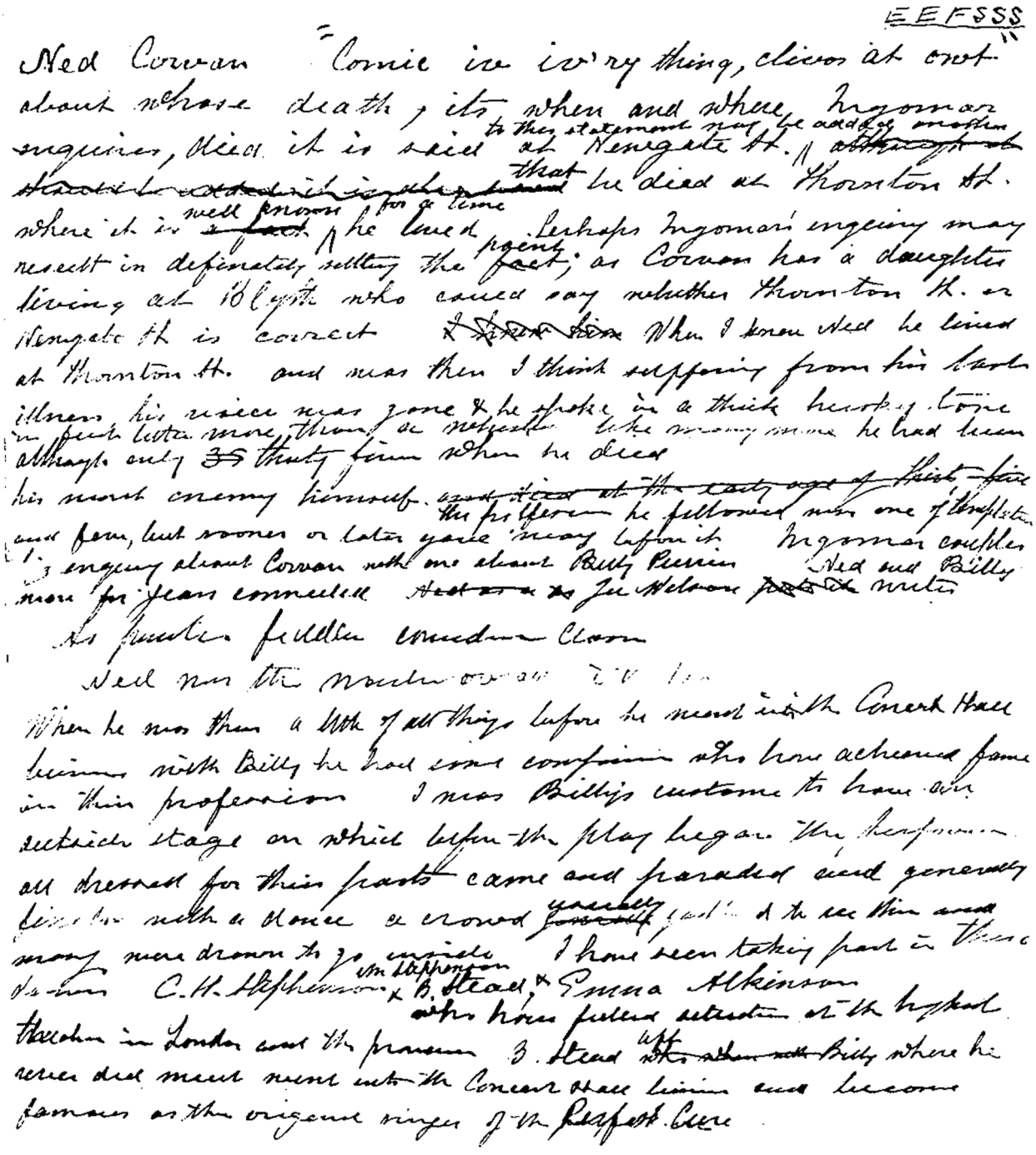
In July 'Elfin' patronised Corvan and his audiences in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

> Corvan's songs will not, I think, live so long as Wilson's, but some of them were well written, and there is a generation yet to the fore who can remember the whimsical humour and the great ability in its way that Corvan threw into everything he attempted. Poor Corvan died in 1865, and he remains here in St Andrew's Cemetery, Newcastle. It would not take much to place a small stone over his grave, and a mark of that kind would meet with appreciation on the part of many who know little about Tyneside poets and musicians of a higher type, but who revelled in the drolleries of Ned Corvan's low comedy.[50]

In August Bella Corvan, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, gave birth to Samuel in Cowpen near Blyth.[51]

In October Richard Welford told Thomas Allan that 'I never saw Robson, and only once or twice, at the most, heard Ned Corvan' and Welford included neither in his three-volume *Men of Mark Twixt Tyne and Tweed*.[52] In December 'Mr. Ned Corvan (son of the late Mr. Ned Corvan, one of Tyneside's popular comedians and vocalists)', sang *The Dialogue between the High Level Bridge and the Old Bridge* at an Order of Druid's banquet in Blyth.[53]

Early in 1891 Barron died in Norton near Stockton,[54] but Bell reopened the Wear in Sunderland in spring.[55] At the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants' Railway Orphan Fund Concert in Blyth Theatre George Barron junior gave 'a humorous reading from Ned Corvan'.[56] Mary Jane and John Errington, a 'Driller', lived in Back Lane, Gateshead, with four children. In Newcastle, Thomas Allan mistakenly believed that Corvan died in Thornton Street, aged 34.



John Ruddock apologised for taking so long to retouch the 'faded photograph' of Corvan and giving him 'a bit more smiling expression in the mouth'.

57

The photograph probably showed the outward effects of tuberculosis of the larynx. In August 'Elfin' suggested more respectfully that Corvan's grave should be marked.

> When will the admirers of the late Ned Corvan do something to commemorate the memory of one of the most gifted comedians and songsters Tyneside has ever known. Poor Ned … lies, I believe, in St. Andrew's Cemetery, and a movement to purchase the ground and procure a stone to mark his resting place might meet with some response.

By November a huge Allan's songbook was available in a small format for 4s and a 'De Luxe' version for 7s.

ALLAN'S

ILLUSTRATED EDITION

OF

TYNESIDE SONGS

AND READINGS.

WITH

LIVES, PORTRAITS, AND AUTOGRAPHS

OF THE WRITERS,

AND NOTES ON THE SONGS.

REVISED EDITION.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE:
THOMAS & GEORGE ALLAN,
18 BLACKETT STREET, AND 34 COLLINGWOOD STREET.
SOLD BY
W. ALLAN, 30 GRAINGER STREET; R. ALLAN, NORTH SHIELDS.
LONDON: WALTER SCOTT.
1891

Allan dedicated the book to the antiquarian Richard Oliver Heslop and acknowledged that 'Twenty-five years have passed since Ned's death, and yet among Tyneside songs there are few so popular as his'. They 'were the true outcome of his feelings and surroundings, and on them his fame rests'. *The Caller* was included in the biography and there were more songs by Corvan than any other writer, including 15 from the 'Author's Manuscript, 1862', with Allan's alterations. *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass* remained unmarried, and *Bobby the Boxer*, *The Greet Bull-Dog O' Shields*, *The Fire on the Kee*, *The Comet*, *The Queen's Visit to Cherbourg*, *The High Level an' the Aud Bridge* and *Cat-Gut Jim, the Fiddler* differed from earlier editions. *Wor Tyneside Champions* lacked its first verse, *The Kipper'd Herring* its penultimate verse and *The Deeth O' Cuckoo Jack* was also shortened. The verse about men allegedly selling wives to place bets disappeared from *Chambers and White* and there was no threat of castration in *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!* Eight songs were allegedly from the 'Author's Edition', but *He wad be a Noodle* lacked the verse about the 'summut' thrown out of a window in the Side, *The Soop Kitchin* title was over-phoneticised, *Stage-Struck Keelman* lacked half the first verse and some patter, while 'donkeys' became 'cuddies' and 'bobby' became 'policeman'. There were several changes in *Astrilly; Or, The Pitman's Farewell*, *Tommy Carr's Adventures in Asstrilly*, *Warkworth Feast* and *Deeth O' Billy Purvis*. In *The Toon Improvement Bill* Allan changed 'place' to 'pleyce', 'Quay' to 'Kee', 'tyek it' to 'tyek't' and 'my' to 'mee'. In *The Rise in Coals* he altered 'seem'd' to 'seems', 'folks' to 'foaks', 'gyeped' to 'geyp'd', 'threepence' to 'thrippence', 'ti' and 'to' to 'te', 'may' to 'maw', 'thought' to 'thowt', 'sunner' to 'suener', 'tettis' to 'tetties', 'through' to 'throo', 'swindle' to 'swindel', 'stopped' to 'stop'd', 'nivver' to 'niver', 'fra' to 'frae'. In *Asstrilly's Goold Fields* Allan changed 'Strillia' to

‘Strilia’, ‘Bessy’ to ‘Bessie’, ‘ti’ to ‘te’, ‘my-sel’ to ‘mee-sel’, ‘com’’ to ‘cum’, ‘leve’ to ‘leeve’, ‘a’ to ‘aw’, ‘sweating’ to ‘sweetin’’, ‘shout’ to ‘shoot’, ‘a’ to ‘an’, ‘Goshcap’ to ‘Goshcab’, ‘fra’ to ‘frae’, ‘queer things’ to ‘a queer thing’, ‘noo a days’ to ‘nooadays’, ‘aw’ to ‘a’’, ‘iz’ to ‘is’, ‘Schuil’ to ‘skeul’, ‘shuddnt’ to ‘shuddent’, ‘ezcept’ to ‘except’, ‘tuen’ to ‘teun’, ‘heym’ to ‘hyem’, ‘Aw’l’ to ‘Aw’ll’, ‘the’’ to ‘thee’, ‘Feythers’ to ‘Robbers’, ‘me heed’ to ‘my head’, ‘Hawkes’’ to ‘Hawks’s’, ‘owertime’ to ‘overtime’, ‘an’ nae’ to ‘en ne’, ‘my’ to ‘maw’, ‘luik’ to ‘luck’, ‘vary’ to ‘varry’, ‘vituals’ to ‘victuals’, ‘nae’ to ‘’ne’ or ‘Nee’, ‘feyther’ to ‘feythor’, ‘’magin’ to ‘’mawjin’, ‘Bessy’ to ‘Bessey’, ‘cannie’ to ‘canny’, ‘ain’ to ‘awn’, ‘maw’ to ‘mee’ and ‘amang’ to ‘’mang’.[58] A reviewer noted that Corvan had ‘excelled in roaring fun and dry dialogue’ and was ‘musical, versatile, and clever’ and ‘a ready composer’. *The Fire on the Kee*, *Warkworth Feast*, *Astrilly’s Goold Fields* and many other songs would ‘perpetuate his memory’, and he and Joe Wilson were ‘shining stars’.[59]

Around this time Leonard Clifford Rudd of Shields Road in Heaton photographed Bella Wilkes and her children. Amy is standing on the left above Isabella junior, Samuel is on his mother’s knee and Thomas is holding a basket.

[60]

In January 1892 ‘Elfin’ reminded *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* readers that Ned Corvan was ‘a favourite, not only in Newcastle, but all over the pit districts of Durham and Northumberland’.[61] The *Literary World* of London believed that Corvan’s songs ‘give us a picture of Tyneside life far more realistic than any description, however elaborate’.[62] In March John Stokoe published the tune and lyrics of *Sma’ Coals* in the *Weekly Chronicle* with a patronising account of the ‘genuine Tynesider’.[63] In autumn Thomas Allan wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* about Tyneside ‘dialect’, under the pseudonym of ‘TYNESIDE’.

> Two years ago E. D. Archbold, Esq., delivering one of the Sunday Evening Lectures at the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, got sung into the phonograph a Tyneside song, ‘The High Level and the And Bridge’. This illustration of Tyneside was got, I think, not so much to preserve the dialect as to be taken on a tour of the world, and mainly to interest Tynesiders who had left the old home … [and] there is little doubt would answer its purpose and interest roving Novocastrians wherever found. ‘B.A’.s’ idea of using the phonograph for a higher purpose, it is to-be hoped, will be taken up before the dialects, as he puts it, ‘are mashed up into one uniform compound’.[64]

At the Belle Vue Church Harvest Festival in Hartlepool, Mr Thompson sang the ‘Tyneside descriptive song’, *Tommy Carr’s letter frev Astrilly*, and was ‘rewarded by an encore’.[65] Late that year Mr. Wright ‘told some funny stories of the late Ned Corvan’ at Blyth Amateur Cycling Club’s annual dinner at the Railway Hotel, Waterloo.[66]

In autumn 1893 Thomas Allan wrote anonymously to the *Newcastle Weekly Courant* and recalled meeting Corvan in Thornton Street when he was ‘suffering from his last illness’. ‘Like many more, himself had been his worst enemy. The profession he followed was full of temptation and few in it but sooner or later gave way’.[67] Allan died in April 1894.

James Stead Edington had married Mary Baynes in Tynemouth in 1866, and in 1871 the ‘Journalist’ and his wife lived in ‘Spittel Dean’ with their 19-year-old Northumberland-born servant Mary Ann Murray. By 1875 the Edingtons lived in Cobourg Street, a ‘favourite situation’ in North Shields,[68] but he soon retired.[69] By 1891 the couple lived in Tynemouth with Isabella Douglas, a 19-year-old servant born in Seaton Sluice. In 1896 Edington published *Ned Corvan*.

Quaint minstrel of the toiling crowd,
Sweet singer in the shady places;
Maker of many a merry mood,
To bring up smiles on weary faces,
Out of the fulness of thy heart,
Nurs’d in the stern and straightened ways,
Sprang the grim humour of thy art,
The tender pathos of thy lays.
Thy sympathies were keen and strong
For all the outcast, downcast throng;
Whenever life was dark and void,
For all the hungry unemployed.
Embodiment of fun and play,
And happy sense of holiday;

With nimble wit and flowing verse,
To pour out tragedy or farce,
And many a text that wisdom quotes –
Some truth that ancient sages spoke;
Laugh'd out in thy melodious notes,
Or on the wheel of wit was broke,
Into new forms of merry joke.
Thy jocund muse upon the moor
Was care and heartache's speedy cure;
Thy frolic fancy in delicious strain
Was antidote for fret and pain.
Whatever moved thy soul to mirth,
Thy faithful fiddle gave it birth;
What happy hits, what varied themes,
Incongruous facts, poetic dreams.
Now wail of war, now plaint of peace,
In tender cadence or wild caprice;
Thy skill and power to charm and melt,
The highest and the humblest felt.

Edington was disappointed that Welford had not included Corvan in *Men of Mark* and believed there was 'nothing more characteristic of Tyne and Wear' or 'North country wit and humour' than his songs;[70] but a pitman poet preferred Joe Wilson's.

Lewis Proudlock was born in Elsdon, near Otterburn in Northumberland, around 1838. He worked in small landsale collieries from the age of seven, but had three months' schooling in 1851, thanks to a patron. The 'Scholar' lived with his parents and five siblings in Hepple near Rothbury, and by 1861 the 23-year-old 'Coal Miner' and his parents lived in Bellingham. He worked in larger pits and accumulated 'a goodly number of books',[71] and his published poetry came to the attention of the *Newcastle Courant* in 1869.[72] In 1871 the 'Ironstone miner' lived in Bellingham with his 19-year-old wife, Margaret, born in Whitfield, and their one-year-old daughter. By 1879 Proudlock conducted a string band at evening dances, and in 1881 the 'Teacher of Dancing & Author of Fiction & Poetry' and his wife lived at Ritten Colt Park, Netherwitton, with another daughter born in Corsenside, two more born in Dinnington, near Newcastle, and three sons born in Netherwitton. On Rothbury hiring day in October 1883 Proudlock organised a dancing 'saloon', and he became 'well-known as a violinist' and as an activist in the Northumberland Miners' Association.[73] By 1891 the 52-year-old worked at the small Stobswood Colliery and lived in Ugham, near Morpeth, with Margaret, five daughters and three sons. In 1896 he published *The Borderland Muse* in London and it included *We Ha'e Nae Body Noo, Or, Granny's Lament*, supposedly by a 92-year-old from Pandon Dean in Newcastle.

I hear wi' pain that gars me graine,
O'or toon's grand fiddler's noo,
Their tunes are Greek, they grunt an' squeak,
An' pierce oor ears a' through.

'Time' canna kill oor 'Jamie Hill,'
His lilting tune 'South Shore'
Still gars my feet, age-cramp'd fast beat
Gude time upon the floor.

An' when I hear his Hornpipes dear,
His 'Bottle Bank' and 'Cage,'
His 'Barber's Pole,' these warm my soul,
A' gi'es new strength to age.

Oft hae I sat an' laughed an' grat,
Owre J.P. Robson's Lays,
His Hamely themes like Lang-syne dreams
Re-ca' Life's early Days

I see ance mair, the 'Cow-hill fair,'
An' 'Billy's weel ken'd 'Show,'
But change an' Pride range side by side
Sin' Billy's heid's laid low.

Noo auld J.P. has left us. He
Has cross'd Death dowly stream,
'Ned Corven's' sangs; his fish-wife's twangs,
Noo just look like a dream.

I still regard as Tyneside's Bard,
O'or hamely soncey Joe
Tho' he's gane hame, his varra name,
Still gars warm tear drops flow.

His sangs still thrill, each magic trill
Can soothe oor sorrow's pain,
Gar kind eye'd 'Hope', wi' mis'ry cope
Gar *sin* forget its *stain*.[74]

It seems unlikely that Proudlock had heard all of these performers.

Stuart Henry Bell had lost a lot of money at the Wear in Sunderland,[75] and by 1893 he admitted it was a 'failure'. Richard Thornton offered his Royal Variety Theatre for a benefit,[76] but it took place at the Theatre Royal and raised £44.[77] Frank Allen, Thornton's manager in South Shields, received the 'subscriptions',[78] and a reminder about Bell's generosity appeared in the *Newcastle Courant*.[79] Late that year the 70-year-old married a teenager. In summer 1894 a blacksmith sued him for non-payment of £6 4s 6d, but the magistrates let him pay 5s a month.[80] His one good eye was failing,[81] and by summer 1895 he was in 'absolute poverty' and seriously ill. Friends saved him from starvation,[82] but he died in summer 1896.[83] In 1897 T. & G. Allan and W. Allan in Newcastle, R. Allan in North Shields and other booksellers sold two Parts of the *Illustrated Edition of Tyneside Songs* for 6d, and 20 of the 49 in Part 1 were by Corvan,[84] but neither Part has been traced.

Most of George Stanley's theatrical life had been spent in and around Newcastle,[85] but in 1881 he left the town, went to the USA, performed in various theatres, and returned to settle in London, where he wrote for stage periodicals and composed dramas and pantomimes.[86] He died in February 1898, aged 75.[87] In March 74-year-old Edington cut his throat in North Shields and the inquest jury returned a verdict of suicide 'in a state of temporary insanity'.[88] In May the *Shields Daily Gazette* noted that Mrs Corvan, the 'widow of the famous Tyneside comedian', had died nine years earlier. In December John Musgrave gave a 'Tyneside Recital' about Ned Corvan at the Gospel Temperance Hall's Weekly Popular Concert in Wallis Street, South Shields, where admittance was 2d for adults and 1d for children under 12.[89]

Between 1888 and 1898 some Stockbridge tenements in Newcastle had been demolished, but Coburg Stairs survived.

90

91

The Oxford Music Hall had been altered in 1886. Harry Mould and John Moralee owned it in 1890, and converted it into the Oxford Restaurant and Public Hall by 1891. Moralee was the sole manager in 1891-1892, but Peter Nelson owned it in 1893-1894, and it was in local directories until 1895. In 1899, when it was a billiards room, it was largely destroyed by fire.[92]

A FIRE which broke out on Sunday in the old Oxford Music Hall, Newcastle, no longer a music hall, but still known as "The Oxford," and tenanted, as regards the principal portion of the premises, by Messrs C. S. Smith and Co., wine and spirit merchants, wrought serious destruction considering the short space of time it endured. The premises consist of a bar, with several divisions on the ground floor, above which is a small bar and billiard-room, while further along on the first floor there is a large billiard-room and a third bar at the extreme back of the building, where the stage of the music hall formerly existed. Messrs Smith and Co. are insured, but they do not yet know whether their insurances will cover the full extent of their losses, particularly as extensive alterations have recently been carried out. The sub-tenants, it is believed, are not insured, and so far as the two bars on the first floor are concerned, the property is completely gutted. 93

The remains were demolished.[94] A newspaper story about 'An Old Hartlepool Legend' included a version of *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!*, but it redirected the threat from its 'jimmy' to its 'whiskers'.[95]

In January 1901 45-year-old Isabella Wilkes died of breast cancer at 86 Disraeli Street in Cowpen Quay.

131	Second January 1901 86 Disraeli Street Cowpen Quay Cowpen U.D.	Isabella Wilkes	Female	45 Years	Wife of Samuel Wilkes Blacksmith Journeyman	Cancer of Breast 9 Months Certified by W. J. B. Fox M.D.	X The mark of Samuel Wilkes Widower of deceased in attendance 86 Disraeli Street Cowpen Quay Cowpen	Second January 1901	Walter Wood Registrar

Samuel signed the certificate with a cross, but had cards printed to invite people to the burial in Cowpen Cemetery.

In Memoriam.
Weep not for me, my dearest friends,
Nor grieve that I am gone,
Let reason dry the fallen tear,
And cease my love to mourn.
We have to mourn the loss of one
We did our best to save;
Beloved on earth, regretted, gone,
Remembered in the grave.
In Loving Memory of
ISABELLA,
Beloved Wife of SAMUEL WILKES,
OF COWPEN QUAY, BLYTH,
WHO DIED JANUARY 2, 1901,
Aged 45 Years.
Interred at Cowpen Cemetery, Jan. 6th.
96

The *Shields Daily Gazette* noted that her father's songs were 'sung on many a distant shore where Tynesiders foregather and where the characteristic dialect and wit are appreciated'.[97] The *Morpeth Herald* agreed that they were sung 'in every clime, where, for old time's sake, Tynesiders congregate'. Locally. *Warkworth Feast*, *He wad be a noodle*, *The Pitman's farewell*, *Nee place noo to play* and other 'ditties' were 'heard occasionally', and *The Caller* was 'a specimen of his more serious song'.[98]

In spring Samuel Wilkes, a 44-year-old 'Hammerman', 19-year-old Amy, 17-year-old Thomas and 11-year-old Samuel junior lived in Disraeli Street, Cowpen Quay, but Isabella junior was not there. Wilkes's in-laws, 43-year-old Mary Jane and 41-year-

old John 'Herrington', a 'Shipyard Plater/Labourer', born in Durham, lived in Clark Street, Cowpen, with five sons born in Durham between 1884 and 1895 and a son and a daughter born in Blyth in 1899 and 1901. Edward Corvan junior was in Halifax.

A Thomas Corven and his wife had sailed as unassisted immigrants in steerage class from Melbourne to Sydney in *SS Cheviot* in 1885 and the stonemason and his wife lived in Redfern Street, Redfern, New South Wales, in 1886, but they had moved to 72 Walker Street by 1889. By 1895 he lived at 10 Thurlow Street, and in 1901 he lived there with six males and two females. In March 1902 Sarah Corven of 42 Dowling Street responded to the news of Bella Wilkes' death on behalf of her father.

> We were very sorry to hear about your trouble [.] We received the paper a day before the letter and never noticed the date on it. And when we received the letter and card we were surprised to see by them that that my neice had been gone so long. Cancer on the breast is a very serious complaint and unfortunately it is a complaint that is fast gaining ground in Australia. I myself have been very bad this last twelve months in bed but I am pleased to be able to say, that I am getting on nicely now. We had one letter from Edward a long while ago now, and we answered it by return of post but so far he has not answered it. My son Tom is still in Africa but not in the same place [.] I will enclose his address [and] also our current one. We were very lucky to receive your letter[s] with the Address you put on them. I was wondering many a time, why you never answered our letter but I was very sor[ry] to hear the cause of it. Where is Bella's other sister and is there mother still alive [?] I will now draw to a close this time [.] Give my love to all the children. I am very glad to hear that the eldest one is as seventeen because she will be able to keep house for you. Sincerely trusting that all your bad luck is past I remain your loving Neice Sarah Corven [.]

Thomas Corven junior could be contacted by the Post Office in Salisbury, Rhodesia.[99]

In Newcastle the rebuilt Wheat Sheaf reopened as the Carlton Hotel opened in 1901, with a billiards room.[100] In December 1902 the vice-chairman of Blyth Rifle Club 'gave an amusing reading from "Ned Corvan"'.[101] William Edward Adams recalled that Corvan was 'not yet forgotten' in 1903,[102] and a man born in Rothbury in 1819, who had become a Newcastle policeman in 1844, had known most 'Tyneside celebrities and notorieties' including Corvan. In 1904 Francis Ward claimed that 'Comparatively few people to-day have heard of Ned Corvan', though he once was 'probably the most popular member of the profession in the North of England'.[103] Mr C.J. Musgrave gave a 'Tyneside Recital – "Neddie Corvan"' at the Gospel Temperance Hall in Wallis Street South Shields,[104] and when the President of Seaton Hirst Literary and Debating Society lectured on 'the most important of the Tyneside song writers', *He wad be a Noodle* was one of his favourites.[105]

Sidney Miles Hawkes, Emily and their 12 children, had lived at Marsden Villa in 1871, but Hawkes resigned as 'Elfin' on the *Chronicle* in 1872, leased Marsden Inn and then the Marsden Grotto pub in 1874. In 1882 the police summonsed him for keeping his house open and permitting drunkenness during prohibited hours on a Sunday. In court Sergeant Deaton testified that Hawkes carried on as if Sunday was an ordinary day. Music was being played, several people were drunk, two men were fighting and there were about 1,000 in front of the Inn. Under questioning from Hawkes, Deaton admitted that he and other officers paid Marsden Inn a lot of attention and he occasionally went up on the rocks with opera glasses. Hawkes pointed out that only one person was arrested for drunkenness, and he had tried to prevent others from behaving badly. He allowed dancing and singing on his premises, and that was not illegal, unless the magistrates relied on a 17th century Act. They dismissed the case, but Hawkes sold the lease, went to live Bruges in Belgium, and later in Jersey,[106] where he died in 1905.[107]

In 1907 *Who Hung the Monkey?* was sung in Banffshire,[108] and Thomas Corven senior died in Camden, New South Wales. In 1911 Samuel Wilkes, a shipyard 'Blacksmiths' Striker', lived in three main rooms at 90 Disraeli Street, Cowpen Quay. Amy was a 'house keeper', Thomas was a 'River-Heater' and Samuel junior was a 'Rivet Catcher'. Mary Jane and 52-year-old Robert Errington, a 'Shipyard Labourer', shared two main rooms in Clark Street with Mary's six sons and daughter, and Edward Corvan, a 50-year-old unmarried 'French Polisher (Furniture)', who gave his birthplace as Newcastle, not Sunderland.

Some years later Amy Wilkes had her photograph taken in Lancashire

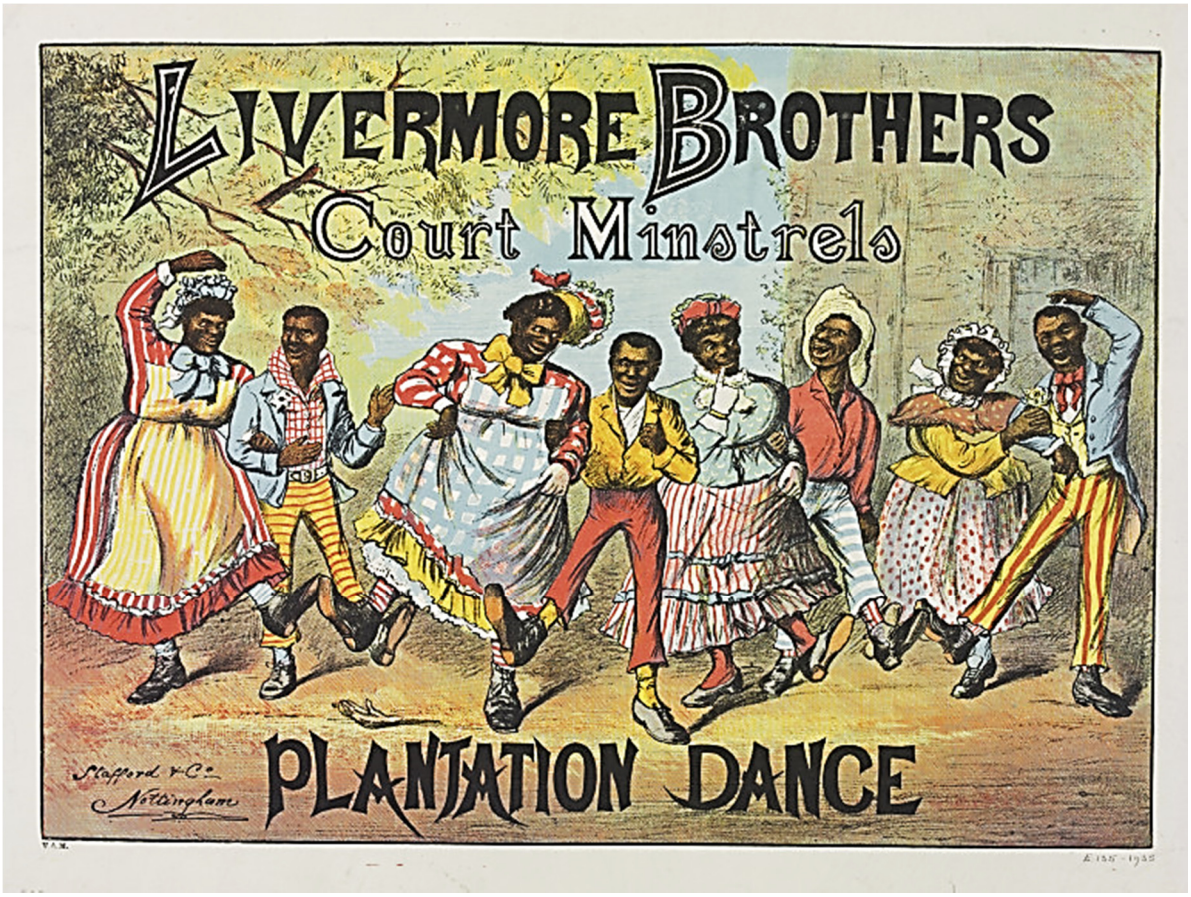
109

Her grandfather's songs were still making money for Thomas Allan's sons in Newcastle, and for a former music hall singer.

17. A good cutter

Robert Catcheside was born in Newcastle in 1815, and by 1841 he and his brother George lived in St. James Street, Benwell, and had a grocers' shop in St. Nicholas's Square.[1] Robert married Mary Dodds, and Robert Marium was born in 1842, but Mary died in 1846, aged about 30.[2] In 1848 Robert signed a petition against increasing military expenditure,[3] and by 1850 he and George lived at Ridley Villas in New Bridge Street.[4] In 1851 Robert signed a petition for the repeal of stamp duty on newspapers, and the 36-year-old married Louisa Mary Gowdy, the daughter of a deceased Navy Captain, in Liverpool,[5] when she was 19.[6] In 1854 Robert supported widows and orphans of soldiers killed in the Crimea, and in 1858 he became a poor law auditor and assessor for St. Andrew's South Ward. Charles Ernest was born in 1860. By 1861 William Armstrong employed about 3,000 in his Elswick engineering works,[7] and the 'Wholesale Grocer' Robert Catcheside and his family of seven lived at 20 East Parade, with two Northumberland-born servants, Margaret Dauce, a 15-year-old 'Nurse' from Banwell, and 17-year-old Mary Jane Dauce, a 'General Servant' from Willington Molland. Robert Marium later married Sophia Bennehan, the 22-year-old daughter of an Irish piano-maker in Manchester, but she died of tuberculosis in 1870.[8] By 1871 11-year-old Charles Catcheside was a 'Scholar' and he had another sister. The family had two servants, 19-year-old Mary Ann Atkinson, born in Newcastle, and 19-year-old Catherine Elizabeth Moore, born in Berwick. By 1872 Robert Marium sang professionally as 'Ernest Sheldon'.[9]

In 1881 Charles Catcheside was a 'Clerk to Borough Treasurer' of Newcastle and had another sister. The family had two servants, 23-year-old Mary Marsden from Wales and 16-year-old Margaret Woodman from Bellingham in Northumberland. In 1882 Charles sang at a concert in aid of Wallsend National School and he was a judge at the Newcastle Corporation's Horse Procession in 1883. That year he married Glasgow-born Annie, the 24-year-old daughter of James McGibbon Esquire, in St. Andrew's Church, and was a presiding officer at the election of a councillor for All Saints West Ward. In 1884 he performed in a fund-raising concert for Northumberland Village Homes at the Tynemouth Aquarium, and accompanied and conducted a concert after the inspection of Newcastle Corporation's horses. Mona was born that year and Bertha followed in 1885. The girls' grandfather died, aged 69, but 'Chas Catcheside' joined the Gosforth Amateur Vocal Society's committee.[10] In 1886 'ladies and gentlemen brought from Newcastle' by George F. Catcheside included 'Mr Ernest Warrington' – Charles Catcheside – and they gave 'a successful concert, both artistically and financially', in support of Murton Cricket Club.[11] In 1887 Mrs C. Catcheside sang at a concert in Stannington,[12] and Robert Marium married Ada, the sister of Horace and Lechmere Livermore, the 'Proprietors of the only Court Minstrels'.[13] In 1889 'Ernest Warrington' sang in an opera at Kilburn Town Hall in London,[14] and the tenor 'Ernest Sheldon' sang with the Court Minstrels.[15] The baritone Charles Catcheside became their 'corner-man' and carried on humorous dialogues with the others,[16] including David John Gillings. He had been born in Great Yarmouth in 1864, and was a percussionist in the Prince of Wales' own Norfolk military band when he was 14.[17] By 1890 he was the Court Minstrels' comic, violinist and musical director.[18]



19

Gillings and 'Charles Warrington' also had an engagement as a duo at Ephison's Circus in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.[20]

From February 1891 'Ernest Warrington' was Acting Manager of the Livermores' St James' Hall in Plymouth,[21] and Acting Manager of the People's Palace in Sunderland, where he sang with 'Mrs Warrington' at 'a miscellaneous entertainment' for Workhouse 'inmates'. He invited the Board of Guardians, but only the chairman and the Workhouse Master turned up.[22] In spring 'Ernest Warrington', a 'Music Hall Manager', Annie and their daughters lodged with a tobacconist in Union Street, Plymouth. 'Warrington' performed at St. James's Hall, and when Hugh Popham loaned his 'fine racing yacht' to the company that summer, 'Warrington' turned out to be 'an experienced helmsman'. Late that year the Livermores transferred him to their headquarters, the People's Palace in Newcastle, 'pending the completion of the People's Palace at Bristol, of which he will have charge';[23] but he and Gillings also performed at the Queens Music Hall in London.[24]

In February 1892, amid 'much interest',[25] 'Ernest Warrington' applied for a dramatic licence for Sunderland People's Palace,[26] and invited the Board of Guardians. The Council discussed the application but the proprietor of the Avenue Theatre and the United Temperance organisations objected. 'Warrington' claimed he had been 'connected with the theatrical profession for about ten years' and nobody complained about Plymouth People's Palace. He was the 'responsible manager' of Sunderland People's Palace and accountable to the General Manager, 'Mr Sheldon', in Newcastle. The Livermores had another People's Palace in Dundee, and another nearing completion in Bristol, and 'made an honest endeavour to provide a legitimate, lawful, pure, and unobjectionable form of entertainment for the public'. Sunderland was 'among the second class theatrical towns' and if people wanted first-class theatre they had to go to Newcastle or Leeds. A solicitor argued that the People's Palace held about 2,000, Richard Thornton's theatre over 2,100 and the Avenue Theatre over 3,000. He believed the Livermores intended to run the Palace as a music hall, but needed a theatre licence to obtain an alcohol licence. Reverend E. P. Lowry of the temperance delegation noted there were 11 licensed premises within 150 yards of the Palace, which had been there for only six months. 'Warrington' insisted he would stage plays and the fire chief was satisfied that the proprietors had 'done everything in their power' to make the hall safe. Two councillors favoured granting a licence, three abstained, but 40 were against.[27]

Charles joined his brother 'Ernest Sheldon', 'the Variety Pioneer', in Newcastle.[28] In spring, in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Sunderland, 'Ernest Warrington' sang *I'm Not Myself at All (Lover)* and *Not the Baby, but the Bicycle*, and recited Tennyson's *The Charge the Light Brigade*. When about 800 people attended a tea in Victoria Hall to mark the opening of parish schools, the concert included 'Ernest Warrington'.[29] Soon after, during a performance of *East Lynne* in London, the audience 'laughed without restraint' when he gave 'a double dose of vulgar clowning' and 'beat his head with comic rage and disappointment against the pillars of the proscenium' when he had to leave the stage.[30] Back in Sunderland he advertised THE PEOPLE'S POPULAR "PALACE," THE PEOPLE'S POPULAR PROGRAMME' with 'THE PEOPLE'S POPULAR PRICES' of 3d to 2s. It was 'Open as usual on Good Friday. No advance on Prices'.[31] Soon after he put a notice in *The Era*.

> Several persons having used my Name in a manner calculated to do me Injury, I give such persons Notice to Discontinue the same, or take the consequences. Solicitor, Mr F. G. LUNDI, 33, Westgate-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Proprietors, Managers, Agents, and Artistes, please Note my only Connection is with the 'Pioneers of Refinement', Messrs Livermore Brothers' People's Palaces. ERNEST WARRINGTON, Operatic Vocalist, Pianist, Conductor, and Acting-Manager, People's Palace, Sunderland.[32]

Days later the *Sunderland Daily Echo* noted that there was 'Standing room only' at the Palace, but how the acting-manager 'managed to pack in so many' remained a mystery. In May well-known artistes' appeared at his first annual benefit, 'Under the immediate Patronage and Presence of the Worshipful Masters and Brethren' of four freemasons' lodges. 'Boxes, Circle and Stalls, 2s 6d. Evening dress. Early doors extra all parts. Tickets only at 6.45. Ordinary doors at 7 p.m.; commence 7.15'.[33] The *Echo* reported that 'To judge from the gigantic audience assembled in the Palace the popularity of Mr Warrington seems assured, the huge building being packed from floor to ceiling, seats being at a premium'.

> [He] was the recipient of numerous testimonials, including a purse of gold, subscribed by the working staff of the Palace … a splendid silver-mounted ebony walking-stick from the committee of the Friendly Society's Home … gold links and studs, and pin from professional friends; a silver-mounted meerschaum pipe and cigar holder from the players of the Sunderland Association Football team; a gold-mounted cigar case from Mr E. Martin, scenic artist; besides other useful and ornamental gifts. … Mr Warrington then presented to each of the players of the Sunderland Association team a silver medal, suitably inscribed, as a souvenir of their … retaining the League cup.[34]

'Warrington' let the North of England Sailors' and Firemen's Society use the hall for a benefit for distressed members, but took a third of the receipts. In November a billiards match between Sunderland and Newcastle Liberal Clubs in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, was 'pleasantly varied by the harmony and mystery' of 'Ernest Warrington'.[35] In December the 'chief contributant' to 'a capital musical programme' at Scarborough's Old Town Hall was 'Mr. Ernest Warrington, of the Livermore Brothers' Minstrels'.[36] Gillings and 'Warrington' performed at the Aquarium, Palace and Sam Collins' hall in London,[37] and advertised in *The Era*,[38] as 'The Mozarts', and soon had bookings for 'nearly twelve months ahead'.

In February 1893 'The Musical Mozarts' were doing 'a good turn' at the Cardiff Empire, whose lessees were Mrs Adelaide Stoll and her son Oswald. The Mozarts played at Bristol and Swansea and then at four halls in London. In summer, when Sunderland People's Palace was available to let, The Mozarts appointed Mr G.H. McDermott of London as their 'Sole Representative'. The 'Musical Marvels' were engaged at the Empire Palace, Portsmouth,[39] and The Mozart 'Company' went on to Yarmouth, Leeds, Cambridge, Derby, Birmingham, Liverpool, Dundee and London.[40] In December the 'musical eccentrics' were at George Edwin English's New Sebright Temple of Varieties in Hackney Road,[41] and Catcheside had a second income.

Jonathan Lewis Young was born in London in 1859. In 1861 the family lived in Bermondsey, but by 1871 Jonathan and his sister lived with their grandparents in Walthamstow. He married in 1879, and by 1881, when he was a shorthand writer, he and his wife and baby daughter lived in Kentish Town. By 1887 he was an agent for the Edison Phonograph Company's Musogram, and in 1891 he claimed to have been born in Scotland.[42] By 1893 the Edison Phonographic Office in Fore Street, London,[43] became the first sound-recording studio in Europe. 'Warrington' later recalled that the 'difficulty' was 'to get a clear and incisive voice – "a good cutter" – as their machine would not give a good result from any other'; but he had a trial and Young engaged him 'at once'. Sheet music cost 4s, or about a quarter of a week's wage for most workers, but the best recordings cost a full week's pay.

> The cylinders were soft wax and only lasted a fortnight or so, and as we made only one at a time, you may be sure I was kept very busy This was remedied later by coupling a number of machines by rubber tube to a central bunch-piece, attached to which was an ordinary speaking tube with a circular mouth-piece. I used to hire the popular songs of the day from a music seller at a penny a time and often had to read at sight, which being a musician, I was fortunately able to do ... I recollect a customer coming into the office one day and asking for 'Dada's Baby Boy' which had that day been published, and while he waited, a copy was brought, wet from the press, run over on the piano by old Dobrowski … and recorded straight away, and was in a few minutes being [displayed] in a shop in Fleet Street where a machine was on view as a novelty.
>
> A metal tube was fixed by a rubber connection to the reproducer and a dozen or more ear-pieces were attached, by which the record could be heard for the 'Small sum of one penny', as the doorman used to announce. As so few records could be made at one time, and the demand being brisk, it was no uncommon thing for me to sing 'After the Ball' or 'My Old Dutch' twenty or thirty times running, and as I heard the 'pros' singing their songs every night in the course of my own business, I was able to give a fair rendition. The not always truthful door-man called out 'Step inside and hear "My Old Dutch" as sung by Albert Chevalier' …

'Warrington' had a tight schedule and he also had to be a salesman.

> I was about to take a provincial tour for a few weeks. Mr. Young asked me to fill up stock as fully as possible before leaving. For a week or two I worked very hard all day and as I was in pantomime at the Pavilion Theatre [Liverpool] … the 'all day' and 'all night' work rather took it out of me. Yet I had been in Liverpool for only a few days when a telegramme arrived requiring my immediate return to make more titles as stock was running low …
>
> [P]erform in Liverpool; supper at sleeping car train from Lime Street at 12; arrive at Euston 4.40 am; sleep in siding till 8; down to a city hotel, bath and breakfast; office at 9.30, where the staff are waiting to work with me against time. Averaging out the length of the cylinder I sang a song every 6 minutes – 2 minutes record, 4 minutes breathing time - and by half past one I had thus sung 40 times. Then took a cab back to Euston; lunch on the train, where my seat was already booked, tea at 6 o'clock; landed at Lime Street at 6.30, straight to the theatre and fulfilled my engagement …

In four days he travelled 1,600 miles, performed four times in Liverpool and sang 160 songs in London.[44]

By 1894 The Mozarts were based in London, but in February 'The QUAINT MUSICAL MOZARTS' were at Cardiff Empire.[45] In spring the 'Musical Comedy Artistes' were at the People's Palace in Baldwin Street, Bristol,[46] then the Empire Palace in Portsmouth.[47] In summer the 'musical comedians' were at the West Pier Pavilion in Brighton, then performed in Leicester, Margate and Aberdeen,[48] followed by the People's Palace in Angus,[49] and that in Dundee,[50] before a long run in London.[51] The *London & Provincial Entre'acte* found their 'musical eccentricities' 'enjoyable, though we have known better'.[52] One Monday evening in October they left their home in Brixton at 6.15 pm. A van ran into their vehicle in London-road, but they 'arrived at Sadler's Wells at 6.50; following on to Leach's, 7.30; Star (Bermondsey), 8.30; Varieties, 9.30; Belmont's, 10.15,' and were back at the Palace at 11.00. Another day they did a matinée at the Palace 'as a sort of livener to their evening's work', played the Cambridge in Commercial Street and then performed again at the Palace.[53]

In spring 1895 the 'Musical Eccentrics' were at the Empire Palace in Portsmouth.[54] In April there were 1,500 free seats at the Crystal Palace Variety Show in London, but reserved seats cost 6d.[55] The Mozarts took part in a farce at the Britannia Music Hall and then at the Royal Aquarium's six-week 'Gigantic Easter Carnival'.[56] They had engagements in Chatham and Portsmouth, and 'Catcheside, E' sang at a testimonial benefit for 'Ernest Sheldon' in Newcastle. The Mozarts performed at six London halls, before going to Blackpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, South Shields, Sunderland and Liverpool. They sailed to Johannesburg, returned, performed in Bath, and had a long run in London.[57] In December they were at the New Temple of Varieties,[58] took part in the pantomime of *Aladdin Up-to-Date* at the Grand Theatre,[59] and ended the year at Hammersmith Theatre of Varieties.[60] By then Jonathan Young's wife had petitioned for divorce on the grounds of adultery.[61] Early in 1896 the Mozarts had a long engagement in London and then went to Bolton, Bradford, Liverpool and Portsmouth.[62] In spring the 'Musical Mozarts, Eccentrics', were at the Royal Aquarium Easter concerts in London,[63] but the two men went solo after May.[64] In September the *Shields Daily Gazette* reported that some 'ladies and gentlemen' had 'formed an amateur singing society' in Whitley Bay, and 'Ernest Warrington, of Ivy House, who is already known the local musical world as the promoter of the first series of al fresco concerts some three or four years ago, and who is said to have had a wide experience in musical and vocal societies, in London and Newcastle, is officiating as director'. In November 'Mr Ernest Warrington, Drawing Room Entertainer', performed at South Shields Art Club.[65]

'Robert Sheldon' had joined forces with the Livermore Brothers and managed Aberdeen People's Palace, but it burned down. In March 1898, at the inquest, three people claimed that there had been insufficient exits and fire appliances and sued them for £500 for the death of a 13-year-old boy, and made two claims of £3,000 for injuries to other boys. The stage carpenter testified that the gallery stairs were too narrow and some unguarded lights were too close to backdrops. There were no fire

hydrants, no fireproof curtain and no firewall. The proprietors had removed the pails of water installed by a circus owner and the fireproof passage was not usually open until the performance ended and. The burgh surveyor testified that it was 'highly dangerous',[66] and the jury took 20 minutes to award £1,000 damages for the death and injuries.[67]

On Boxing Night the Victoria Hall in Ealing in west London staged *Aladdin*, 'written and invented by Mr Ernest Warrington', though *The Era* noted that the story was 'told with primitive simplicity'.[68] Late that month 'Mr. Catcheside' sang at a Grand Evening Concert at Cramlington Station, Northumberland.[69] In November 1899 'Mr Ernest Warrington' played a brigand in an opera in Kilburn, London.[70] The Livermore Brothers and 'Sheldon' had been sued for debts relating to their Alhambra Music Hall, in Aberdeen,[71] but challenged the damages awarded to the mother of the 13-year-old victim.[72]

In 1900 German-made flat disc records costing 2s began to flood the British market and marginalised wax cylinders.[73] In spring 1901 'Charles E. Warrington', a 'wine agent' and his family, lived with Annie's father, a wine and spirit agent, at 22 Delaval Road, Cullercoats, and 'Warrington' performed at Boldon Rugby Club's 'smoker' in the Black Bull Hotel.[74] 'Sheldon' had taken his annual benefit at the Aberdeen Alhambra, and in September he married Mabel Grieve in nearby Cults.[75] In November the Sheldons, an Aberdeen solicitor, the Livermore Brothers and two Nottingham printers formed The Aberdeen Palace Theatre Ltd,[76] with 12,000 shares at £1 each,[77] but no shares were available to anyone else.[78] In December a Chamber Concert in the Victoria Hall, South Shields, was 'under the direction of Mr Eric Foster', and it was repeated in January 1902. Early in 1903 Annie 'Warrington' died. In spring a pianola recital at the Victoria Hall was 'under the direction of Mr Eric Foster', and in summer Messrs Ferry and Foster had a sale at their King Street shop.

> Phonographs (for Large and Small Records), 8s; sale price 10s.
> 1 Phonograph (for Large and Small Records), 6s; sale price £5 with 6 records.
> 1 Columbia Penny-in-the-Slot, £5; sale price £4 5s.
> 8 Pathe Phonographs, £2 5s; sale-price 40s with 6 Records.
> 6 Pathe Phonographs, 32s 6d; sale price 27s 6d with 2 Records.
> 6 Pathe Phonographs, 30s; sale price 25s with 2 Records.
> 50 Cheap Phonographs, 8s 6d; sale price 5s.
> Large Stock of Gramophones from £2 2s. X.P. Records, sale price Is 8d each.
> Pathe Records, sale price 1s each.
> Edison-Bell Records, sale price Is. each. Large assortment at 6d each.

In spring 1904 South Shields Meister Minstrels aimed to raise funds for 'local deserving institutions' and their debut at the large Royal Assembly Hall was 'crowded in every part, the best seats being filled by a fashionable audience'. 'Eric Foster', one of the six 'Corner Men', contributed 'Comic interludes and songs'.[79] That year 'Catcheside-Warrington' recorded shellac discs for the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Company in London, as did 'Eric Foster',[80] who sounded remarkably similar, but who evidently paid no income tax.[81]

In 1905 'Robert Sheldon Catcheside' sailed to San Francisco.

82

He had returned by 1906, retired, and lived in Brislington near Bristol.[83]

Reportedly Charles Catcheside became a commercial traveller in theatrical goods,[84] and in 1908 the 48-year-old, giving his age as 43, married 33-year-old Helen Edith Harris in London. Late in 1909 there was a large audience the Aged People's Christmas Treat in Widdrington, Northumberland, where 'Mr. Ernest Warrington' of South Gosforth performed a 'humorous song', sang *May Morning*, took part in a comedy sketch called 'Railway Courtship', sang *Willow, Willow, Waly*, gave a 'recital' called 'A row at the pit', sang *Don't let anybody know* and *Jack and I* and a 'mixed assortment' of 'humorous songs', as well as being the accompanist and director. The concert concluded with the National Anthem.[85] That year the first double-sided disc appeared.[86] In spring 1911 51-year-old 'Charles Ernest Catcheside-Warrington', a 'Commercial Traveller (Wines and Spirits)', claiming to be 49, lived at 8 Windsor Terrace, South Gosforth, with 'Helen Edythe Warrington' and their unmarried daughter Mona, who was a 'Teacher in private School'. Late that year 'Ernest Warrington' recorded George Ridley's *Cushie Butterfield* for the Gramophone Company in Hayes, Middlesex,[87] and he had got to know a Newcastle shopkeeper.

Joseph Windows, the son of a labourer, was a 'Sergeant of Police' when his son James was born in Cowley, Oxford, in 1870, and in spring 1871 Joseph and his 33-year-old Henley-born wife, Jane (born Gale), lived at 53 Princes Street. By 1881 Joseph was an 'Inspector of Police' and he and his second wife, Fanny, lived in Princes Street with 10-year-old James, a 'Scholar', four other children and Joseph's first mother-in-law, Ann Gale. By spring 1891 James was a 'Music Sellers Assistant' in Newcastle and lodged with Annie Turnbull in Monday Street, Elswick. In 1896, in Oxford, he married Maud Frances Hind; and by 1901 the 'Piano Dealers Assistant', Maud and three-year-old Maurice lived in King John Street in Heaton. By 1911 'James Gale Windows' was a 'Music & Musical Instrument Dealer' and employed several staff. He lived in a six-room house in Cardigan Terrace, Heaton, with Maud, Maurice, a 'Scholar', five-year-old Hedley, and Maggie Calder, a 'General Servant Domestic' born in Jarrow.

Late that year J.G. Windows' 'Music and Pianoforte Saloons' at 6 Central Arcade, Newcastle, published an *Album of Tyneside Songs*, Volume I, with 'The Tunes Collected, and the Pianoforte Part Arranged, by C.E. Catcheside-Warrington', and printed by the Oppenheimer Brothers in Leipzig. 'C.E.C.-W.' wrote a Preface in Gosforth.

> Every district has its 'Folk Songs', and we on Tyneside are certainly blessed with a large and varied selection. But, while the words have been carefully preserved – notably in the excellent volumes published by Messrs. Allan, 20, Blackett Street, Newcastle (by whose kind permission I am allowed to use the words of several of the most popular songs) and frequently by means of the 'Weekly Chronicle' rescuing from oblivion the songs of our local poets, the tunes are in danger of becoming forgotten and extinct. As one who was associated with the late Dr. Bruce and Mr. John Stokoe in presenting the 'Northumberland' tunes to the public, it became an interesting hobby to collect the 'Newcassel' tunes proper, and after hoping for some years that someone more conversant with them would have printed them in a cheap and convenient form, I am now induced by many friends to present them in these pages, as much for our friends and relatives abroad as for those at home. Those who have travelled can appreciate the longing of our dear ones 'far across the sea', in whose hearts the music of Tyneside inspires all the deep, warm feeling of devotion to the 'Canny Toon' and the land of their birth; for, go where you may, the Tynesider gives way to none in the loyalty and pride one may justly feel for the home of one's youth. I am aware that some of our music has been published by Messrs. Walter Scott, Ltd., and also by Messrs. Andrew Reid, Ltd., but many of the tunes I have given will be found in print for the first time. I wish to express thanks for assistance in obtaining, both words and music, to Messrs. Allan, Blackett Street, Newcastle, the editor of the 'Weekly Chronicle', Edward Clerk, Esq., Mr. D. McPherson, Mr. Ed. Hetherington and Messrs. Ascherberg and Co., for the use of 'Last Neet'; and finally to Mr. R. Oliver Heslop, the great authority on matters 'Tyneside', for his kind approval and encouragement of my efforts. I may add that should this volume meet with the acceptance of the public, as I am led to hope, it would be followed by further volumes – with music – traditional and otherwise.

(Bruce and Stokoe noted no 'association' with Catcheside in their *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* in 1882, but both had since died.) 'C.E.C.-W.' credited no lyricists, but altered Allan's mediated lyrics.[88] He later confirmed that the *Album* appeared in 1911,[89] yet Joe Wilson's *Geordie Haad the Bairn* was 'Copyright 1912 by J.G. Windows', and copies were also available from two London shops.[90] In February 1912 the *Morpeth Herald* believed that the *Album* would be 'warmly welcomed by North-country folk, who are well known for their devotion to everything "local"'. It believed, wrongly, that all the tunes had 'never been in print', but belonged to a 'bygone age', and were 'in danger of being forgotten'. The accompaniment was 'purposely simple' and 'quite in keeping with the subject of the text,' while the 'printing, paper and general style of the volume are excellent'. The *Herald* wished it 'every success'.[91] Later that year J.G. Windows claimed copyright on the arrangements in *Album of Tyneside Songs* Volume II, which credited the lyricists, and included Allan's mediated versions of Corvan's *The Fire on the Kee* and *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass*.[92]

In May 1913 'Mr Ernest Warrington provided the humorous portion of the programme' when the West Moor and Forest Hall Brotherhood male voice choir sang before a 'large and enthusiastic' audience in the Cooperative Hall.[93] Late that year Windows published *The Tyneside Lancers: or the traditional tunes and songs of old Tyneside*, with piano arrangements for dances.[94] In time for Christmas 'C.E.C-W.' wrote a Preface for the *Album of Tyneside Songs* Volume III in South Gosforth.

> In presenting the 3rd Volume of "Tyneside Songs with music" I cannot but express my satisfaction that there is evidently such a widespread need for their production, and I once again thank the lovers of Tyneside Songs for their appreciation of my efforts the songs with their original tunes. I have to thank Mr. Harry Nelson for the use of three of his songs in the Volume, also Mr. Raine of Middleton Teesdale for the words of 'Wrang train agyen', from an old book in his possession; Mr. C.M. Leumane, Australia, for 'The Lambton Worm' and Messrs T. and G. Allan Blackett Street for kind use of words from their Volumes of Songs. By special request, I have inserted 'Oh! Bonny Scotland' in this Volume, also 'Gift o' the Gob' by Mr Harry Haldane, under which 'nom de plume' is concealed the well-known name of our distinguished authority on matters Tyneside – Mr. R. Oliver Heslop. I would like to point out to some of my 'musical' friends, that the errors in grammar, which are quite apparent to the ordinary student, are intentional: my object being to preserve the music in its original state, as in my opinion, any attempt to modernise the accompaniment would rob the songs of their old-fashioned character.

He included a 'Vocabulary of Local Dialect' and a guide to 'correct pronunciation' with the 'kind permission of the Editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*'. Corvan had written *The Caller* in 'standard' English, probably as a recitation, but Catcheside included a piano arrangement.[95] *Oh! Heh ye Seen Wor Jimmy* was Harry Nelson's plagiarism of *The Fire on The Kee* and Clarence Mather ('Jack') Leumane had written *The Lambton Worm*. He had been born in or near Sunderland in 1844 and had written the lyrics for a Tyne Theatre pantomime in 1867. He later joined the D'Oyley Carte Opera Company, toured Australia in 1887,[96] settled in Adelaide, taught singing,[97] retired in 1903, married in 1907 and ran a vineyard.[98]

In London Jonathan Young sold fake recordings allegedly made by public figures like the late William Gladstone and over 200 phonographs bought from former North American franchises and middlemen, until an injunction from Edison-Bell put an end to this fiddle.[99] In 1901 the 'maker of printing/copying apparatus' lived in Streatham and claimed he was born in Walthamstow.[100] After Edison-Bell's British patents expired, Young established the National Phonograph Company, but Edison-

Bell subsequently bought it. In 1910 Young published 'How a Needle Disc Record is Made', and in 1911 he joined the English Record Company Ltd as a recording expert. He evidently prospered.

Yet by 1913 the English Record Company Ltd was bankrupt.[101]

In spring 1914 'Mr C.E. Warrington' was elected as a member of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries. He also acknowledged a toast to 'The Artists' at a 'Military Smoking Concert' in the Drill Hall, Barrass Bridge, and 'contributed to an enjoyable concert'. He was Senior Deacon of the Lord Collingwood Lodge of freemasons in Byker. His main duties were to welcome and escort visitors and candidate members and introduce distinguished visitors, and in summer 'Bro. C.E. Warrington' attended a memorial service for a fellow mason. The *Newcastle Journal* welcomed *Tyneside Stories and Recitations* Volume II since its humour was 'peculiar to this district' and 'calculated to tickle the risible faculties of the most serious', and it was on sale at 'Messrs T. and G. Allen [*sic*]' in Blackett Street and 'Mr J.G. Windows at 6, Central Arcade'.[102] Like Volume I this was mainly composed of tales about feckless or ignorant working men, and especially pitmen.[103] Soon after 'about 300 ladies and gentlemen' heard 'Mr C.E. Warrington' perform at the Newcastle Ratepayers' Association party in Jesmond Dene.[104]

In August, when war was declared, shellac became a strategically important material. German pressings factories focussed on war production, and the British recording industry almost disappeared.[105] J.G. Windows published Catcheside's *Tyneside Stories and Recitations* Volume III in Newcastle,[106] and they were 'quite to the taste of the audience' at a Wingrove Presbyterian Church concert. He attended a 'call to arms' in the Theatre Royal, under the auspices of the War Office, where the chairman bragged that Tyneside 'had not been beaten' in recruiting and 'several young men the audience joined the ranks', but in reality 2,876 local Irish-born men had volunteered. In December the *Journal* noted that the military *Tyneside Stories* would be welcomed by 'our brave defenders' and 'brighten up the weary vigil both ashore and afloat'. 'Mr J. G. Windows, Central Arcade, is the publisher, where all previous editions of Tyneside songs, stories, etc., may be had'.[107]

The *Birmingham Daily Mail* warned visitors to Hartlepool not to ask residents 'Who hung the monkey?'

> The story is especially apropos to-day, since it concerns the last invasion scare. When Hartlepool, then a little fishing village, with the rest of the country was expecting 'Bony' any minute, it chanced that foreign barque was wrecked off the Tees. The only survivor was huge ape who was rescued by the fishermen, interrogated and as was unable explain his bona fides in any language known by the villagers, hanged as a French spy![108]

The paper did not mention Corvan or his song.

Late in 1915 'C.E. Warrington' entertained 100 guests at a Newcastle County Hotel banquet for a retiring commercial traveller. Early in 1916 Mr J.J.H. Catcheside, a ship-owner, died in Tynemouth and the mourners included 'Mr C. E. Catcheside-Warrington'. Soon after 'Charles Warrington' 'provided an excellent musical programme' when the Lord Mayor presented the retiring Chief Superintendent with a purse of gold, a gold watch and a brooch for his wife at the County Hotel.[109] After 'Robert Sheldon (Catcheside)' died, a Bristol paper's obituary noted that the mourners included Horace Livermore, but did not mention Robert's brother Charles. (When Robert's widow Ada died two years later, she left £5,705 4s 1d.)[110] By spring 1916 men aged 18 to 41 with no exemption had to enlist. 'Mr C.E. Warrington' was in his mid-50s and had 'engineered 136 concerts' in support of the armed forces. 'Mrs Warrington', whose 'military recitations' were 'highly appreciated by the 'boys'', had organised almost as many; but the *Newcastle Journal* was concerned about the 'musical taste of the average wounded soldier', since

> highly flavoured sentiment and low comedy songs finding most favour, and though both may be found in the ordinary programme, there is still a large amount of what may termed 'good' music, and there is always the probability that this portion of the programme is serving to educate the taste of many a musical disposition who, for want of good example the artistic, might fall from grace to the lower regions of 'Ragtime'. Though the music hall has popularised this syncopated, nerve-racking form of noise, and it was to be expected that popular audiences would applaud it, nevertheless, it is remarkable fact that even in cases where men were from the South and could not understand the dialect, 'Tyneside songs' have always proved most popular. As one remarked, 'I don't know what it's all about, but it's deuced funny. Let's have another'.

'Mr C.E. Warrington' sang 'popular numbers' at the Northumberland War Hospital, 'much to the delight of a crowded and enthusiastic audience'. By May unexempted married men had to enlist and 'Catcheside-Warrington' dedicated *The Fighting Fifth*, 'a bright military 'quickstep', to a local regiment. The *Journal* believed it was 'well within the compass of the average pianist' and 'ought to become very popular in these days of military doings'. In July 'Mr C.E.C. Warrington' was a scoutmaster at St. Luke's Parish Hall. The Commissioner proposed that groups of six or more scouts should help farmers for seven hours a day during the school holidays and sleep 'in barns, granaries, or other buildings'. In the event 103 scouts camped on the grouse moors at Keld in Swaledale to replace the enlisted beaters and 'C.E.C. Warrington' organised transport and 'the commissariat department'. 'Guards were mounted every night' and 'their vigilance was tested by raiding parties' headed by two colonels, but the boys captured them. In autumn 'Mr C.E.C. Warrington' was 'in command' of welcoming Sir Robert Baden-Powell.

> A church parade will take place at St. Thomas' Church at 10.45 in the morning. The troops will muster without staves equipment in Eldon Square at 10 o'clock ... Markers must report themselves to the commanding officer a quarter of an hour earlier. Headed by massed bands the troops will proceed to the church, via Blackett Street and Northumberland Street. After the service the troops will march to the Royal Engineers' Drill Hall, Barrass Bridge, where they will be inspected and addressed by the Chief Scout.

When Lady Londonderry opened a bazaar in Tilleys Rooms, Market Street, in aid of Northumberland YMCA's plan to provide huts for recruits, 'Mrs C.E. Warrington' ran a fancy goods stall and 'Mr C.E. Warrington' was Honorary Secretary.

Early in 1917 the 'Odds and Ends troupe' gave an 'excellent entertainment' for the County Durham Fund in the Miners' Hall, Fencehouses, and the 'crowded audience made repeated demands for encores'.

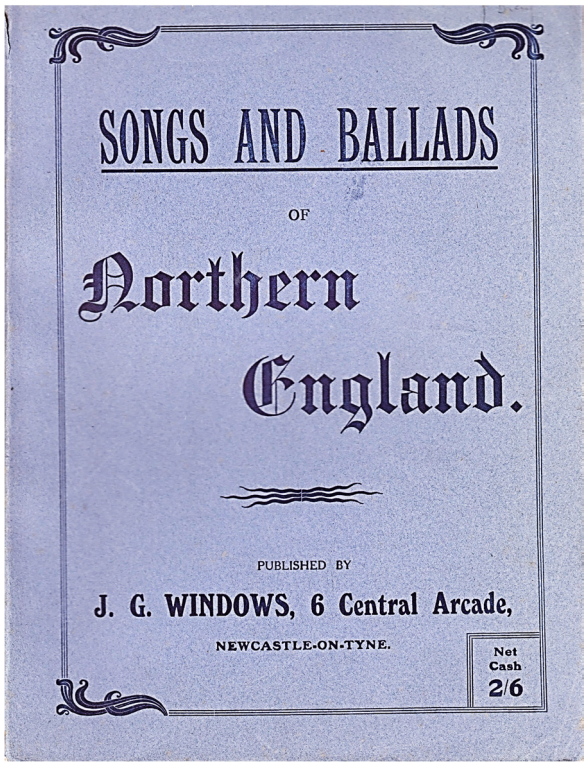
> Miss Winnie Elder's humorous songs were loudly re-demanded, as was also the duet 'Lead me to love', with Mr C.E. Warrington … [and] numerous encores were claimed from Mr C.E. Warrington. The choral work of the troupe was excellent, and the concerted numbers, 'We are the Odds and Ends', 'Niddicombe Fair', 'Hi! Bonnie Lassie', and the 'Brass Band', were all delightful. … 'The Odds and Ends' have appeared with acceptance at the Naval Hostel, Armstrong College, Gosforth Hospital (three times) and various billets in the district.

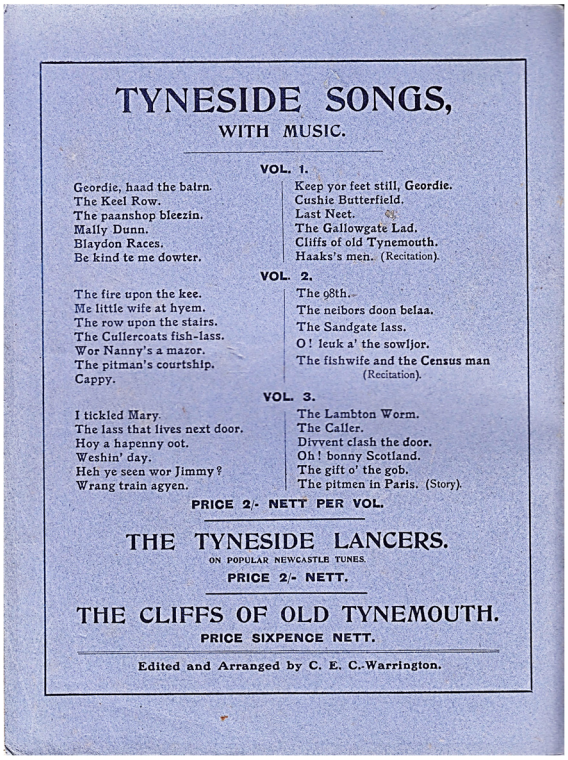
When a military surgeon married a 'very well-known and popular local vocalist' in Benton Parish Church, 'Mr C.E. Warrington' played 'suitable selections' on organ and the service was 'fully choral'. In spring the 'Odds and Ends entertained 700 wounded soldiers 'under the direction of Mr C.E. Warrington', and when an admiral took the salute in St. James' Park, 660 Boy Scouts marched by, 'headed by a bugle band under the leadership of Bandmaster C.E. Warrington'. J.G. Windows published Canon Ross-Lewin's *The Fighting Fusiliers*. In summer 776 officers and scouts celebrated the king's birthday on the Town Moor and 325 cubs were headed by a 'massed band, under the leadership Mr C.E. Warrington'.[111] The butts of his *Tyneside Stories and Recitations* Volume IV were working men in uniform, while Volume V and Volume VI included patronising tales about working-class people in general, and female domestic servants in particular,[112] but Catcheside had competition as a recording artist.

James Cosgrove was born in Newcastle around 1875. In 1881 he was a 'Scholar', but his nine-year-old sister Bridget was not, and both were in Elswick Workhouse. James subsequently became a professional entertainer known as 'J.C. Scatter',[113] and recorded *Blaydon Races* in 1908,[114] and again in 1909.[115] He reportedly sold thousands of recordings,[116] and in summer 1910, after Newcastle United won the Football Association Cup, he performed at Leeds Empire.[117] By 1911 the 34-year-old 'Travelling Comedian' and his 33-year-old Newcastle-born wife, Isabella, had six children aged 13 or under, all born in Newcastle, and they and the 'Charwoman', Kate Crony, lived in three rooms in Mansfield Street. Early in 1912 he was back at Leeds Empire,[118] and then appeared at the recently-opened Old Star Picture Hall in Boldon Colliery.[119] Early in 1914 the 'Renowned Tyneside Comedian' was at the Savoy Electric Theatre, The Green, in the Southwick district of Sunderland, with his recent hit, *Just Like a Proper Copper*. His son John joined him in April. 'Prices as usual: 2d. 3d. 4d. and 6d'.[120] Scatter performed at a cyclists' concert at the Crow's Nest Hotel in Newcastle,[121] and in August, after war was declared, the 'well-known Tyneside Comedian' and two of his children formed the Cosgrove Trio and performed at the Gaiety Picture and Variety Theatre in High Street East, Sunderland, which was 'One of the Coolest Halls the Town' with 'Comfortable Tip-up Chairs Throughout'.[122] In spring 1915 the 'clever comedian' was at Queen's Park Hippodrome in Manchester.[123] That autumn Driver W. Turnbull of the Army-Service Corps in the British Expeditionary Force told the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* that his company included many Tynesiders and they organised 'open-air concerts', so it was 'only natural that we should desire to hear some good old north-country songs' like Scatter's. Scatter sent 'several of my own songs, music, patter, etc.', and hoped 'the boys at the Front will enjoy them'.[124] He appeared at Garston Empire in Liverpool,[125] and late that year at Grantham Empire.[126] In spring 1917 he had an 'enthusiastic reception' at Newcastle Hippodrome and in autumn performed at a concert for discharged sailors and soldiers at the Adelaide Picture Hall in Benwell. In summer and autumn 1918 he had further engagements at Newcastle Hippodrome. Late that year he performed in a concert in support of the Northern General Hospital,[127] and 'the well-known Tyneside comedian' was 'laughter maker in chief' in Middlesbrough Opera House's pantomime and sang *Go to bed early and save the coal*.[128] In spring 1919 he was at Sunderland Palace and in autumn, at Burnley Hippodrome, he was praised 'not for his songs, but for his excruciatingly funny patter, his good clean jokes and his sparkling mannerisms.[129] Late in 1921 'the Tyneside comedian' was 'an amusing Widow Twankey' in *Aladdin* at Sunderland Theatre Royal, and he 'received the cordial welcome which always greets him';[130] but music halls, variety theatres and mechanical record-players faced serious challenges from electronic technology.

18. Under the tarmac

In 1921 William Gillies Whittaker, Reader in Music at Armstrong College, Newcastle,[1] published *North Countrie Folk Songs for Schools*,[2] and probably soon after J.G. Windows reissued John Stokoe and Samuel Reay's *Songs and Ballads of Northern England*. Apart from the blue covers and the advertisements on the back it was identical with the 1892 edition.[3]





4

Three of Corvan's songs were still in print, but none had been issued as recordings.

In 1924 'Charles Ernest Catcheside-Warrington' was a partner in The Growers Company of market gardeners, nurserymen and seedsmen at Fawdon.[5] J.G. Windows Limited's 'Piano & Music Warehouse' published *Tyneside Songs* Volume IV for 2s 6d 'Nett Cash', and W. Paxton & Co. Ltd. of 36-38 Dean Street, Soho, London, sold copies. Catcheside's preface noted that 'the growth of public appreciation of Folk-lore, throughout the country, has been remarkable, and nowhere more so, perhaps, than on Tyneside'. The songbook did not credit lyricists, but advertised *Tyneside Stories and Recitations*, including 11 by 'C.E.C.-Warrington'. The contents were mainly anonymous songs about domestic life, but Samuel Reay had done the 'pianoforte arrangements',[6] and they were identical with those in *Songs and Ballads of Northern England*.

The British Broadcasting Company had opened a radio station in Newcastle in 1922,[7] and by 1925 it broadcast six hours or so of programmes each day which included a good deal of music. The programme could be heard 20 miles away, though the telephone exchange caused repeated clicks.[8] In February a 'Variety Night' included 'Catcheside Warrington (Tyneside entertainer)':[9] in March 'C.E. Catcheside Warrington' sang *The Carol Singers* by William Sterndale Bennett, *Hurricane History*, *Flannel* and *Sandy McLusky*;[10] and in December he took part in a 'Northumbrian' programme that was broadcast nationally.

> A Border Foray. Roy Henderson (baritone), Tom Clough (Northumbrian Pipes), Catcheside Warrington (Tyneside entertainer) … Lang Syne on the Border: Chevy Chase. Overture, Chevy Chase' (Macfarren). Freebooter Songs (W. Wallace). Chevy Chase, a Ballad Tale: Lament, 'Flowers of The Forest' (Traditional), 'At the Sign of 'Boot and Spur,' 'Let me the cannakin slink' (MacEwen), 'Bring Us In Good Ale' (Holst), 'Robin Adair' (arr. Fletcher). … Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, In Readings from his own poetical works, 'Whin' and 'I Hear a Sailor'. Northumbria Two Hundred Years Ago. 'The Long Pack', a Dramatic Tale of Northumberland. Canny Newcassel: Off to the Races; 'Blaydon Races' (Traditional); A Sing-Song: 'Down the Wagon Way' (arr. Whittaker), 'The Keel Row' (arr. Dunhill), 'Billie Boy' (Northumberland Capstan Shanty) (arr. R.R. Terry). In the Streets Newcassel: Old Street Cries. Memories: Tyneside Rhapsody (O. Mumford). Auld Lang Syne.[11]

In 1926 'Warrington' lived at 3 Stoneyhurst Road, South Gosforth,[12] known as Fife Lodge.

After the *Sunderland Daily Echo* argued that the legendary monkey was hanged at Greenock, the *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* retorted that 'Scotsmen, not content with managing a good deal of the Empire and annexing the plums in sport, the professions, and politics,' were 'jumping the historic claims of others'.[13]

In spring 1927 J.G. Windows's 'NEW EDITION' of *Tyneside Songs* Volume I cost 2s 6d, and 'C.E. Catcheside-Warrington' wrote a second Preface.

> I wish to return my thanks to the host of admirers of Tyneside and Northumbrian Folk-lore, for the great appreciation which has rewarded my efforts of the past sixteen years in collecting and editing the words and arranging the tunes of this, and the three volumes which succeeded its first appearance in 1911. The great popularity of the songs to-day, in community singing, as dance music, and as concert items, is a satisfactory evidence of the result of my labours.
>
> In response to numerous requests, I will shortly publish two more volumes of Tyneside Songs together with another volume of purely Northumbrian Songs ...

J.G. Windows advertised that they were the 'Accredited Dealers for "His Master's Voice" Radio & Records' and other 'Records for the Lover of Serious Music'.[14] The songbook included a sketch of well-nourished and well-dressed children in a large drawing room, with a girl playing a grand piano, and Windows advertised their piano-tuning service. In May Newcastle BBC broadcast 'A Tyneside Evening' with 'C. Catcheside Warrington, Tyneside entertainer', and 'Tom Clough, Northumbrian pipes', and in summer another programme included 'Catcheside Warrington';[15] but the new volumes of *Tyneside Songs* did not appear.

In May 1928 BBC Newcastle broadcast 'C.E. Catcheside-Warrington', a 'Tyneside Entertainer',[16] and when Jamieson Dodds recorded Ridley's *Cushie Butterfield* and *Blaydon Races*, 'Catcheside-Warrington' received 1d a side for his arrangements. Early in 1929 the Columbia Gramophone Company issued *Blaydon Races*,[17] sung by 'Catcheside-Warrington',[18] and Newcastle BBC broadcast 'Catcheside Warrington (entertainer)'.[19] The *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* noted that the 'well-known Tyneside entertainer' had 'long been a collector of North-Country folk-lore and sings his songs and tells his stories as only a born Tynesider can', so it was 'in great measure due to his efforts that many old Tyneside tunes have been collected and preserved'.[20] Late that year J.G. Windows advertised 'All Electric Mains Operated 2, 3, or 4 Valve Wireless Sets', 'Complete with Loud Speaker', from £15.[21] Windows' shop at 6, 7 and 8 Central Arcade reissued *Tyneside Songs* Volume II and 'C.E.C.-W.' argued that the continued success of the songbooks 'proved how much they were needed'; while 'the great appreciation they have met with, both in print and as Gramophone records, has more than compensated for the labour of preparing them'. W. Paxton & Co. Ltd. of London were joint publishers. Windows advertised their 'expert service' for 'music of all kinds, gramophones and records' and 'the latest in radio or radiogramophones'. They were agents for HMV, Columbia, Decca, RGD, Pye, Phillips, KB and Marconiphone: sold tickets for 'International Celebrity Subscription Concerts'; and advertised songs by Alderman Hogg and others.[22] Oxford Galleries Dance Band recorded *Blaydon Races*,[23] sung by 'Catcheside-Warrington'.[24]

In summer 1929 J.C. Scatter broadcast on Newcastle BBC radio,[25] and he and Dewey Gibson recorded *Blaydon Races*, using Catcheside's arrangement.[26] 'Catcheside-Warrington' also recorded *Blaydon Races*,[27] and *Cushie Butterfield*,[28] and plugged *Tyneside Songs*,[29] whose Volumes III and IV were in their third edition.[30] William Gillies Whittaker was now a professor at Glasgow University and an adviser to the BBC.[31] Early in 1930 Manchester BBC broadcast 'Catcheside Warrington (entertainer)' relayed from Newcastle.[32] In spring Newcastle radio's 'light and popular concert of a thoroughly "Saturday evening nature"' would be 'broadcast throughout the Northern Region this evening from 7.30 till 9.0'.

> Leeds and Newcastle provide humorous entertainment as supplied Stainless Stephen (from Leeds) and Catcheside Warrington (from Newcastle). Stainless Stephen needs no introduction listeners. Catcheside Warrington, too, is well known throughout the North as an entertainer, but not everyone knows that is a collector of folk lore and recognised in the North of England an expert in Tyneside dialect. In fact his publications and records are now receiving world-wide recognition.

In autumn Catcheside was to 'entertain his usual inimitable way' and Tom Clough would play the 'Northumbrian pipes'.[33] That year T. & G. Allan had opened a shop in Whitley Bay,[34] and Margaret Barton's account of the Hartlepool monkey legend, published in New York, claimed that the animal had escaped from travelling showmen.[35]

In 1931 Manchester BBC relayed St. Hilda's Colliery Band and 'Catcheside Warrington (entertainer)' from Newcastle.[36] In 1932 he recorded *Blaydon Races* and *Cushie Butterfield* for Edison Bell,[37] and the *Yorkshire Post* noted the monkey legend.

> Hartlepool has once again 'hung the monkey'. The first occasion will be remembered - will, indeed, never be forgotten; and I believe the locals may still easily annoyed if asked whether they have hung the monkey lately. Not that I wish to annoy the locals, and so I have never asked them. But the facts, as you well know, concern a monkey which escaped from a ship during the Napoleonic War and being captured on the Fish Sands, and chattering in foreign tongue, was presently hanged as a French spy. So Hartlepool got a bad name with monkeys, and many years afterwards a ship's monkey, hearing that it was bound for Hartlepool, threw itself overboard rather than meet a worse fate. And so we come to Hartlepool's third monkey. It arrived at the Victoria Dock all happy and unsuspecting, but yesterday its dead body was fished out of the water. How it got there is not known, nor is it known how later it came to be hanging from lamp-post at the foot steps leading the Staith Master's office.
>
> But that, the locals insist, is the only way to treat French spy.[38]

In January 1933 Newcastle and North Regional BBC radio broadcast 'Catcheside Warrington' in 'Tyneside Songs and Story', 'drolly revealing the comic side of the life of the north-east coast', and he broadcast again in April.[39] Around this time six freemasons performed at a dinner in Newcastle's Station Hotel, when Roman Catholic clergy entertained the Lord Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, and the comedian Jimmy Muir recalled that after the show

> the dinner organiser inadvertently handed the fee money to Harold Woodmass instead of to Catchy. In a quiet corner, Harold counted it and made a mental note, before handing it over to Catchy, who distributed it. Half of the amount, it turned out, was for himself and the rest for the other five – just 'washers'! There was an unholy row and Woodmass called Catchy a 'bloody little villain'. As a result, I later received a five shillings postal order – additional fee – but it was the end of any further alliance with Catchy.[40]

That summer J.G. Windows died at Oaklands in Gosforth, aged 62. The *Sunderland Daily Echo* noted that he had been 'one of the best known figures in the world of music of the North East', had organised Newcastle police concerts, and 'claimed to have the largest sale of music copy in the North'.[41] He left £8,000 to his widow and accountant. That year 76-year-old Mary Jane Errington, Isabella and Ned Corvan's daughter, died in Tynemouth.

In 1934 *The Shields Hustler* published three of the five verses of *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass* and claimed that Corvan 'came from the south' to 'join the Company of the noted Billy Purvis on the North Quay'. Corvan was 'a comic singer and an expert violinist' and 'would sing this song to the flare of oil lamps, the clash of cymbals, and the rolling of the big drum, to a most admiring crowd'.[42] Around this time Mrs Nannie Lisle took a creel of fish from Cullercoats to North Gosforth, and when Catcheside-Warrington asked her why she did not give the familiar 'cry', she replied that 'Aa hev ne need te cry it'.[43] In autumn 1935 he published 'anecdotes' about his wire fox terrier in the *Sunderland Daily Echo*.[44] Early in 1937 the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* insisted that 'dialect' was 'still to be found', but 'we should get little enough of the Tyneside variety if it were not for the research and records of Mr C.E. Catcheside-Warrington.

> He is not only a keen and discerning collectors of gems in local song and story, but he has the music of a Tyneside tongue upon which to express and deliver them.
>
> 'The Fishwife and the census Man' was the witty bit of cross talk with which he brought down the house the other night, and there are other older and neglected sketches of Tyneside character which he is competent to revive and which would fill the Connaught Hall in Newcastle for a series of Saturday Night Concerts.
>
> It would be a joy to all Tynesiders if he would restore some of the songs and patter of rare Ned Corvan and one of the most delightful to me has the fine fresh lilting lines.

Then came a verse of a version of *The Cullercoats Fish-Wife* and a very grainy photograph of Catcheside.

Soon after Hartlepools Motor Club announced a 'Novelty event in aid of Cameron Hospital' called 'Who hung the monkey?' 'Entry 6d per person', with a minimum of 1s per vehicle, and 'Valuable prizes'. Competitors should bring a 'flash-lamp, pencil and note-book,' but 'magnifying glasses and finger-print outfits' were 'optional'. About 60 people set off in 20 vehicles to 'discover an arch-criminal who had disposed of the monkey ("a copper's nark") at Seaton Carew', and found a monkey 'hanging to the flag-staff', then after visiting Stockton they found the 'culprit' at Picton Station.[45] In July the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* noted the death of the 'celebrated collector, arranger and interpreter of Tyneside songs' and 'one of the foremost authorities in the North of England on the subject of the songs and stories of old Tyneside'. 'Well-known in Masonic circles, he had been a 'Past Master of the Commercial Traveller' Lodge and held the rank of Provincial Grand Master. He had been the 'Northern representative of Seager Evans and Co.',[46] a London firm that specialised in distilling gin and owned Strathclyde Grain distillery and Long John International Ltd whisky.[47] Catcheside left his widow £96.

Early in 1939 Nannie Lisle still took a creel of fish from Cullercoats to North Gosforth. That summer 'Eldon' of the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* received a response to Arthur J. Fenwick's enquiry for 'relics of Billy Purvis'. Mr. J.R. Dodds, a builders' merchant in Tynemouth Road, North Shields, had 'a sketch of the showman playing his pipes', done by Ned Corvan.[48]

In May 1940 Hartlepool's Chief Constable was accused of being a spy and stirred the memory of a former native in Derby.

> Even to-day, if you go to Hartlepool and ask 'Who hung the monkey', it nearly causes riot. Postcards satirising the Incident are sold in the local shops. The people from the north-east coast now living in Derby and district will recall that when Hartlepools United played neighbouring teams in 'Derby' games the shout, 'Who hung the monkey', caused many a free fight.[49]

In July 'Odd Man Out' claimed in the *Shields Gazette* that Billy Purvis had 'discovered' 'Young Corvan' when he was already 'an accomplished fiddler'. He occupied a seat in the orchestra' and was 'famous among the old bards of the Tyne' for his 'canny bit voice'. *Random Rhymes* 'contains many of Corvan's best songs, some of which have long since been forgotten'.

> Corvan was at the pinnacle of his fame when he came to South Shields and settled *down* as a publican in Wapping Street. He also ran the Corvan Music Hall ... But the change was not for the best. He paid the penalty of popularity in an excess of jovial friends with whom he spent too many convivial nights at his house, and after four or five years he gave up the business and went back to the halls.

'Odd Man Out' relied on Thomas Allan's version of events, and quoted verses of what he called *Canny Sheels - South Shields Corporation*. Ralph Todd recalled that his uncle had sung Corvan's songs to him as a boy and he was 'often immensely amused by the stories told at the fireside of the great comedian's patter and character delineations on the stage'.[50]

J.C. Scatter's record label, Imperial, had closed in 1934,[51] and he suffered ill health and a lack of engagements at larger venues, so he did 'turns' in Tyneside clubs and pubs for a shilling or two.[52] Eventually a reporter traced him and in January 1938 he took part in a North Regional Stagshaw Searchlight radio broadcast. Later that year Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon introduced him onstage at Newcastle Empire,[53] and he and Daniels were photographed together.

In July 1940 31-year-old Private Daniel Cosgrove, Scatter's son, was killed at Dunkirk.[54] In October the *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* announced that the monkey legend was 'the theme of a song sung on the music-halls by Ned Corvin'.[55]

By 1941 J.G. Windows' had cut the price of a volume of *Tyneside Songs* to 1s. Archie Armstrong of Queens' Road, Monkseaton, was 'one of the finest authorities on the words and music' of local songs and was 'famous for his broadcast Tyneside song recitals'.[56] The *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* noted that Corvan wrote *The Death of Billy Purvis*, but did not mention *Who Hung the Monkey?* In 1943 Hartlepudlians sent over 1,000 'picture postcards' of a hanged monkey to 'various parts of the globe', including the USA, Canada, Egypt, North Africa and Rhodesia, while 'scores of strangers' heard of the legend and 'quickly seek postcard confirmation of it'.[57] A *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* correspondent recalled 'rare Ned Corvan', but had to explain what *The Caller* was about. In August James Cosgrove, the 'beloved husband of Isabella', died in Worsley Street, Newcastle, aged 68,[58] and the *Newcastle Journal* noted that his most popular song had been *Blaydon Races*.[59] He was buried at Elswick Cemetery. Early in 1944 a *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* correspondent called Corvan 'one of the cleverest and most versatile comedians that ever sang on Tyneside'.

> He was a gifted violinist, a painter of no mean ability and the composer of some of our best known local lyrics, which for humour combined with true pathos, are in their way unequalled. Many of them are still remembered and sung and are classics of Newcastle and records of its history.
>
> In 'The Caller' and 'The Hartley Calamity' we have pathos and sentiment, and in his songs of 'Astrilly', humour and pathos united: the hard times of the miner at home and the hope of better times in Australia.[60]

James Harrison of Lister Street, West Hartlepool, told the local paper that his maternal grandfather, Thomas Hood, had witnessed the hanging of a monkey when 'a heavy gale was raging, thick with snow and wind in a northeasterly quarter'.

> A large French privateer, Chasse Maree, was observed during a lift in the weather, bound south and dangerously close to the Heugh.
>
> The master had seen the danger in becoming embayed with the Longscar under his lee. He put his helm down, shook two reefs out of the mainsail and headed seaward, close hauled on the port tack. Shortly after this manoeuvre the mainsail split from head to foot. Before the head sheets could be started, the vessel's head payed off, took a heavy sea broad on the port quarter which smothered her and she foundered.
>
> … In due time wreckage washed ashore – welcome pickings for the fishermen – together with something alive clinging to a piece. This was a bedraggled, shivering monkey. The fishermen caught it held a 'lobster-pot court martial' and decided it was a French spy. The penalty for a spy being death, the monkey had to be hanged. A coble's mast with halliard rove was erected on the Fish Sands. The monkey paid the death penalty.
>
> Afterwards the fishermen visited their usual haunt, the public house which then stood on or very near the Fish Sands, and drank confusion to the French.

Another correspondent preferred Margaret Barton's version of events,[61] but neither mentioned Corvan or his song. In spring J.G. Windows advertised 'Radio Overhauls, Repairs and Replacements' in Newcastle. Mrs Patterson of Byker asked 'Eldon' of the *Chronicle* to send her copy of one of Windows' songbooks to a member of the armed forces who were 'wanting Tyneside Songs', and he posted it to Craftsman E.H. Dobson in the West African REME in India.[62] Driver R.J. Natt, a former Hartlepudlian in the Australian Imperial Force in New Guinea, reported that he was called a 'monkey hanger', thanks to a Sunderland man, but he got his own back by spreading the story that Sunderland people 'choked the wooden duck'.[63] In Dartmouth Nova Scotia Helen Creighton recorded Vincent McGuckin and Peter Burns speaking *The Cullercoats Fish-Lane* [*sic*].[64]

In summer 1945 a 'Durham exile' in Tamworth, Staffordshire, asked 'Eldon' for the lyrics of *Who Hung the Monkey*. 'Eldon' could not 'recall having seen or heard' the song, but received a very old picture of the execution from John A. Fortune of

Greenfield Avenue, Westerhope. He had been raised in Hartlepool and attended West Hartlepool and Hartlepool Rovers matches. 'We used to tie an effigy of a monkey on the crossbar of the goal posts and at half-time the effigy was borne down the field to the other end'. 'Eldon' commented that years earlier 'when anyone who dared to inquire "Who hung the monkey?" … where the fisherfolk lived', they had to 'make themselves scarce in quick time', but the 'present generation … look upon the whole thing as a rather silly joke'.[65] When a film called *Johnny Frenchman* set the monkey legend in a village in Cornwall, 'Old Hartlepudlians from all over the country' complained. In May 1946 Mr W. Boagey reported that a US magazine had published 'the fable about "Who hung the monkey"', and in September Hartlepool Rugby Football Club Old Boys offered to pay the first person to identify the impersonator of the monkey's executioner at a dance.[66] Gateshead Workhouse in Saltwell Road, had opened in 1890, and part of it, known as High Teams Institution, became Bensham General Hospital in 1941. In September 1946 Edward Corvan junior, a 'French Polisher' of 'No Fixed Abode' died there of heart failure, aged 84.

383	Eleventh September 1946 Bensham Hospital U.D.	Edward CORVAN	male	84 years	of No Fixed Abode a French Polisher	1(a) Myocardial Failure. (b) Toxaemia. (c) Cellulitis of Arm. Certified by H.S. Kinsella L.R.C.P.	R.C. Jones Occupier Bensham Hospital Gateshead	Twenty-sixth September 1946	W.H. Smith Registrar

In 1947 'John O'Heugh' wrote in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* about the circuses in Galley's Field, Hartlepool, but only at second-hand. He noted that Corvan had written *The Death of Billy Purvis* and *Who hung the monkey?*[67] After Dave Gillings had gone solo 49 years earlier he had become successful as 'George Mozart' in British and Australian music halls, and he also toured large vaudeville theatres in the USA in 1907.[68] In the 1920s he was the landlord of the Green Man and French Horn in St. Martin's Lane, London, and he appeared in films in the 1930s, including a cameo role in *Pygmalion*.[69]

Gillings died in London in 1947.[70]

Late in 1949 'Old Bob', a 'Heugher', complained to the *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* that West Hartlepudlians were trying to steal the monkey legend and the paper published a sketch of the hanging.

Port Glasgow people claimed that soldiers had dressed a monkey in a French uniform and inhabitants of Greenock hanged it.[71]

Joseph Lingford and Son's *Lingford's High Level Tyneside Song Book* included half of *The High Level an' the Aud Bridge* by 'E. Gorvan', plus three of the five verses of *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass*, but no patter, and Harry Nelson's plagiarised *Oh! Heh Ye Seen Wor Jimmie!*[72] All four volumes of J.G. Windows' *Tyneside Songs* were available. Volume II cost 2s 6d, 'NETT CASH', but my copy has '3/6' in pencil and my copy of Volume IV has 2s 6d blacked out on the cover and pasted over on the title page.

Probably in 1950 J.G. Windows reissued what they called *Tyneside Songs Volume One*. They were 'accredited dealers for "His Master's Voice" RADIO & RECORDS', which could be 'listened to in comfort at any time' in their showrooms 'without obligations', and advertised their piano-tuning, regulating, overhauling and repairing service. They listed the contents of all six

volumes of *Tyneside Stories and Recitations*, without naming the editor, and but credited the four volumes of *Tyneside Songs* to 'C.E. C.-Warrington'. They advertised 'Records for the Lover of Serious Music', but no recordings of 'Tyneside Songs'. *Volume Three* cost '3/6 NETT' and advertised 78rpm shellac discs and HMV 'Long Play' records, first produced in 1948, and seven inch 'Extended Play' records, first produced in 1949.[73] That year Fred Lawson recorded *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass* on a 78.

In Sunderland C.V.H. Vincent had heard the cry 'Who Hung the Money' by supporters of teams defeated by Hartlepool Rovers and West Hartlepool.[74] In 1950 he wrote a 'pageant' called 'Who Hung the Monkey' for the West Hartlepool Operatic and Dramatic Society,[75] and he blamed the Stockton Volunteers for the legend. In summer 1951 the Society performed a 'specially prepared version of the borough's famous legend' and the BBC recorded the performance. People in Peterhead in Aberdeenshire asked 'Fa hangit the monkey? and claimed the story' The BBC broadcast the Hartlepool 'monkey' recording nationally, but Mr Vincent had died by 1952.[76] That year William Hunter wrote to the *Burnley Express*.

> 'WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?' That cry has greeted Hartlepool folk in all corners of the globe. No doubt It will be heard Burnley, too next Saturday. The comical incident from which the call comes, though often looked upon as fiction, could possibly claim a foundation in reality. … Legend has it that during the Napoleonic wars a French man-o'-war was sunk off the north-east coast. The sole survivor was the ship's mascot - a gorilla (or monkey) — dressed in naval uniform. On being washed ashore it was met (at Hartlepool) by a party of crofters who seized upon it as a spy. The animal was immediately seized and cross-questioned as related in an old folk song:
>
> 'They tried every means to mek him speak,
> They tortured the monkey till loud did squeak,
> Says yen that's French, says anuther it's Greek.
> For the fishermen then got drunky oh.
> He's all over hair, sum chaps did cry.
> He's up to summit cute an' sly.
> With a cod's head then they closed an eye
> Afore they hung the monkey, oh'.
>
> The gorilla was tried, found guilty and hanged. Years ago Hartlepudlians were annoyed at any reference to the tale, but nowadays, probably as result of its fame, it is deemed by them an honour to be dubbed a 'monkey hanger'.[77]

In summer the legend was invoked when the amalgamation of Old and West Hartlepool was mooted. In 1953 a Hartlepudlian came out of his Cannes hotel to find a note reading 'Who hung the Monkey' on his car.[78] In 1957 a Hartlepool periodical had no evidence supporting the legend, but a hanged monkey was on the Hartlepool Rovers' tie and 'a true Hartlepudlian takes pride in the story'.[79] Around 1958 Alec Forester recorded *Oh, heh ye seen wor Jimmy* on an EP of 'Geordie Dialect Records', possibly in Sunderland, but the 'Windmill Series' seems not to have continued.[80] Dennis Weatherley recorded *The Caller* for the BBC, but the tapes reportedly went into a skip.

In 1960 Ralph Todd recalled his Old Hartlepool grandfather. 'I never once heard him mention the monkey' and the family 'always regarded the story as something put about by the "West Dockers"'.[81] In 1962 the *Sunderland Daily Echo* noted that Ned Corvan's output had been 'prodigious, and probably more of his songs are still known than those of any other writer'. The one about the 'female street hawker looking for her son Jimmy' was 'still sung now and again', *The Cullercoats Fish-Lass* was well-known and someone had sung *The Hartley Colliery Calamity* on TV; but if he had not written *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey* the 'unfortunate event might have been forgotten'.[82]

In 1970 the Hartlepool historian Robert Wood noted that 'Generations of Hartlepudlians have long laboured under the foul calumny of being some of those misguided fishermen who hung the monkey', but they should 'embrace it as an heraldic supporter of their own particular "blason populaire"' (a taunt by one community against another), just as Sunderland was called 'the place where they tried to drown the wooden duck and where they painted the lighthouse red to save buying oil for the lamp'.[83] The last Cullercoats fishwife to wear traditional dress worked in South Gosforth,[84] and the Newcastle publisher Frank Graham included versions of *The Cullercoats Fish Lass* and *He wad be a Noodle* in his *Tyneside Songster*.[85]

After working in Sunderland Libraries, Meg Hartford had begun training as a junior/secondary teacher three years earlier.

> Kenton Lodge College was a female-only college in big old houses at the junction of Kenton Road and Grandstand Road in Newcastle. My main subject was geography but the course programme also included music and we would have to teach at least one song to pupils on out forthcoming teaching practice, and about 20 of us were instructed to go down to Windows and buy *Tyneside Songs* Volume I. My first teaching practice was the Victoria Jubilee School in Byker and I taught the kids a song or two in the local vernacular. The irony was that while the college music lecturer was promoting Tyneside Songs, the English lecturer suggested to many of the girls that they lose their local accents. He was newly arrived from 'down sauf,' full of himself and a pratt. He made arrangements for elocution lessons but nobody attended, and when we had to speak to him we would use the broadest accent we could manage, so he did not last long.

Meg and her husband Mike subsequently moved to Nottinghamshire, where many Durham and Northumberland pitmen and their families had migrated after their pits were closed.

> In large mining communities such as Ollerton, Cotgrave, Gedling and other places it was as if you were no more than five miles from Grey's Monument, so teaching the Tyneside songs went down a treat with the kids. Someone nicked my copy of the book so my mum got me another from Windows in 1971 and it cost 30p.[86]

That year Alex Glasgow included a version of Corvan's *The Toon Improvement Bill* in a play about Joe Wilson called *Joe Lives*![87] He wanted to draw parallels between Newcastle Corporation's shenanigans in the 1850s and the Council's vandalism in the 1960s; but he acknowledged to me that the play should have been about Corvan, and in 1972 I published a critique of Thomas Allan's mediations.[88] In 1973 Robert Wood argued that the monkey story probably did not predate Corvan's song by many years and published the lyrics from a slip song of *Who Hung the Monkey*, except for two verses he deemed 'unfit for a family newspaper'.[89] In 1976 Corvan was an important element in my PhD thesis on north-east working-class culture.[90]

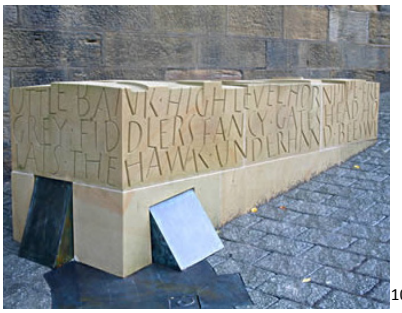
In 1981 Balmbra's concert hall in Newcastle closed,[91] and in 1982 the monkey legend was claimed by people in Boddam, Buchan.[92] Keith Gregson became interested in Corvan in the early 1970s,[93] and in the late 1970s he ran folk clubs.

> As Head of History at the largest comprehensive school in Hartlepool I was aware of the 'Monkey' story and was thrilled to discover a copy of Corvan's original song about it in the library, but it was different to the versions published in Tyneside songbooks. I was interested in the origins of songs, and Ned's song led to a more intense interest in him as songwriter and entertainer. The context of his writing and performance was largely in place, thanks mainly to the work of Dave Harker, but I was more interested in singing the songs and what they were about.

Joe Ging took Gregson to meet the Tyneside novelist Sid Chaplin, who believed that Alex Glasgow got the wrong man when he wrote *Joe Lives!* It should have been about Ned, the 'great visual entertainer'. Gregson 'pieced back Ned's lyrics with their original tunes,' 'hand-wrote the musical notation and produced a 10,000-word essay to contextualise Ned's songs in Victorian Tyneside'. Roy Palmer wrote an introduction and Vin Arthey found an Oxford publisher, Kemble Books, who agreed to fund a book.[94] In March 1983 Gregson's *Corvan. A Victorian Entertainer and his Songs* included 39 lyrics with music.[95] BBC Radio Newcastle broadcast his 'The Man Who Wrote the Fish Lass song' in May,[96] and a book-reviewer compared Corvan to Bobby Thompson, 'The Little Waster'.[97] By 1984 Ging had sung *The Deeth Of Billy Purvis* on TV and Gregson noted that *The Cullercoats Fishlass* was 'often sung in serious fashion by female sopranos'.[98] Graham Dixon published *The Lads Like Beer*. *The Fiddle Music of James Hill* in 1987.[99]

In 1996 a Corvan painting of Billy Purvis sold for £1,050,[100] and a self-portrait as 'Cat-Gut Jim' went for £580 in 1999.[101] Tom McConville recorded *Cat-Gut Jim The Fiddler* for the first time and J.G. Windows' *Tyneside Songs* went out of print.

In 2002 Johnny Handle and the High Level Ranters recorded *Ye're Gannin' To Be a Keelman* for the first time and in 2004 the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* included Roy Palmer's partly accurate entry for Corvan.[102] In 2005 the Northumbrian Pipers' Society published *The Fiddle Music of James Hill* and in 2006 Peter Coates' six-foot high fiddle, commemorating him, was erected on Bottle Bank in Gateshead, along with a stone bearing the names of some of his tunes.


103

In 2012 Balmbra's reopened briefly for the centenary of *Blaydon Races*,[104] and Dixon republished *The Lads Like Beer* in 2013.[105] Hartlepool Library had a 'Monkey File' and there was a *Monkey Business* fanzine for Hartlepool Rovers' supporters,[106] and an image of a hanged monkey on the club's website.[107] Corvan's childhood home in Coburg Stairs, Newcastle, was under a restaurant, and he lay in an unmarked grave in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Jesmond, under a crumbling tarmac path.

108

Over 100 of Corvan's songs have yet to be recorded.

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239885 References.indd 4 17/03/2017 12:19

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Recordings

(R) = reissue

Caller, The

1950s	Dennis Weatherley	Tape	BBC
1950s	Dennis Weatherley	Tape	BBC
2001	Dennis Weatherley	CD	MWMCDSP27
2002	Dennis Weatherley	CD	MWMCDSP46 (R)

Cat-Gut Jim The Fiddler

1999	Tom McConville	CD	TCCD02
2002	Thomas Allan	CD	MWMCDSP37
2007	Brian Watson	CD	ONTCD2004

Cullercoats Fish-Lass, The

1944	Vincent McGuckin & Peter Burns	Tape	cweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.afc.afc9999005.20779/default.html
1950	Fred Lawson	78rpm disc	Manor M50
1952	Dunelm Singers	Tape	BBC
1969	Jean Clough	LP	Beltona LBA & LBS 66
?1970	The Barry Sisters	LP	Thistle BSLP 130S
1970	Isobel Baxter	LP	Decca Eclipse ECS 2073
1972	Northumbrian Traditional Group	LP	MWM 1005S
1983	Marian Aitchison	LP	STW 01
1984	The Barry Sisters	LP	MWM SP4A (R)
2002	Sheila Armstrong	CD	MWMCDSP35
2002	Judy Dinning	CD	MWMCDSP37
2002	Judy Dinning	CD	MWMCDSP61 (R)
2002	Judy Dinning	CD	MWMCDSP68 (R)
2002	Sheila Armstrong	CD	MWMCDSP87 (R)
2008	Margarette Ashton	CD	GR004
2011	Angie Lonsdale	DVD	MWMDVD78

Fire on the Kee

1972	Barry Canham	LP	12TS219
2010	Jim Mageean	CD	BITCD316

Toon Improvement Bill, The

1971	John Woodvine	LP	MWM 1003S
1976	Alex Glasgow	LP	MWM 1011
1997	Alex Glasgow	CD	MWMCDSP21 (R)
2002	Geoff Wonfor & Friends	CD	MWMCDSP37
2002	Tim Healey	CD	MWMCDSP42
2009	John Woodvine	CD	MWMCDSP97 (R)

Ye're Gannin' To Be A Keelman

2002	Johnny Handle & the High Level Ranters	CD	MWMCDSP37
2002	Johnny Handle & the High Level Ranters	CD	MWMCDSP38 (R)
2003	Johnny Handle & the High Level Ranters	CD	MWMCDSP58 (R)
2005	Johnny Handle & the High Level Ranters	CD	MWMCDSP68 (R)

Song, Tune & Verse Index

Acrostic on the death of Wm. Mitford *66*
Advice to Young Men 59-60
After the Ball 159
'All you that wish your names to be …' 109
All Round My Hat 41
Alley Croker 102
Always read The Times in the morning 135
A Man's a Man 27, 63
A Man that is Married 44-5
Am Sweet Siventeen = The Sandgate Lass
Annie Lawrie *81*
An' sae will we yet 123
Armstrong's Gun 94
Arthur's Chair = Cade Idris
Astrilly; or the Pitman's Farewell 41, 44, 53, 65, 74, 81, 91, 145, 152, 155, 167
Asstrilly's Goold Fields; or Tommy Carr's letter 42, 44, 53, 65, 75, 81, 91, 130, 153, 167
A Taste for the Drama 81
Atkin's Free and Easy 55-6
At the Sign of the 'Boot and Spur' 164
Auld Lang Syne 4, 164
Auld Robin Gray 81-2, 123, 146
Auld Wife's Plant 150
Aw wish yor Muther wad cum 137, 161, 164
Baboon, The 95
Barber's Pole The 154
Battle of Inkerman 75
Beer, Boys, Beer 63-4
Before the Bells did Ring 112
Beggar Girl's Petition, The 57
Be kind to me dowter 164
Bella Gray 20, 42-4, 53, 65, 75, 91
Betsy Baker 67
Betty Broon 56
Billie Boy 164
Billy Nutts 68
Billy Patterson 90
Billy Purvis turned Ranter Preacher 6, 16, 62, 147
Black Joke 23
Blaydon Races 164-5, 167
Blow the winds I ho! 31
Blue Bells 146
'Blue-legged Bumler …' 18
Blyth in a Bleeze 24, 62
Bob and Joan 42, 90
Bobby the Coxer 101, 130, 152
Bobby Walkstraight's Visit to the Greet Leviathan 88, 101
Bohemian Girl 43
Bold Dragoon 49-50
Bonnie Dundee 93
Bonny Coally Tyne 81-2
Bottle Bank 154
Bow Wow Wow 6, 52, 83
Brass Band 163
Bring Us in Good Ale 164
Cader Idris 51
Cage 154
Caller, The 130, 155, 161, 164, 167, 169
Campbells Are Coming, The 25
Campbell's Grand Saloon 22-3
Cameron Men = March of the Cameron Men
Canny Folks o' Sunderland 61
Canny Jimmy Hill 37, 62
Canny Newcassel 164
Canny Sheels = South Shields Corporation
Cappy 23, 164
Carlin Sunday 81-2
Carnival de *Venus* 136
Carol Singers 164
Carpenters' Strike 61
Cat-Gut Jim Fiddler 81-2, 86, 101, 123-4, 131-2, 138, 152, 170
Chambers and White 91, 131, 152
Chant 58, 73-4, 99, 120
Chapter of Donkies 23
Charge the Light Brigade 158
Charity Boy 39
Cheer Boys Cheer 63, 82, 89, 123
Cheer, Niggers, Cheer 63-4
Chevy Chase 164
Christmas Carol and Chorus 89
Christmas Lilt; or, Callin' In 115
Cliffs of Old Tynemouth 78, 164
Cod Liver Oil 49, 53
Coffee Supper in Pudding Chare 87
Collier Lads 63
Collier's Advice. The 97
Collier's Farewell 65, 68
Collier's Letter to Phrenologist, A 61
Come, Come with me to the Old Kirkyard
Comet, The; or The Skipper's Fright 89-90, 130, 152
'Comic iv iv'rything – clivor at owt' *145*
Cork Leg 48
Corn Clips 6
Corn Rigs 146
Country's Rum, The 30
Cove vot Sings, The 56
Cuckoo 13
Cuckoo Jack 81-2
Cullercoats Fishlass = Cullercoats Fishwife
Cullercoats Fishwife, The 53, 65, 75, 91, 125-6, 130, 152, 161, 164, 166, 168-9
Curds and Cream-house Ghost 17, 147
Cushie Butterfield 160, 164-5
Dada's Baby Boy 150
Dandy Fiddler 48
Dan Tucker 19
Dan's Apprehension! *141*
Days we went a Gypsying 64
Days When I Was Hard Up 49-50, 53, 65, 75, 81, 91
Death of Billy Purvis (Corvan) 51, 53, 65, 75, 81, 91, 145, 152, 167-8, 170
Death of Nelson 73, 114
Deeth O' Billy Purvis (Emery) 53
Deeth o' Bobby Nunn 53
Deeth o' Cuckoo Jack 99, 120-1, 130, 148, 152
Deevil amang the Tailors 82, 123
Derry Down 20, 41, 61
Descriptive Chant = Chant
Divvent clash the door 164
Doctor Syntax 66
Don't let anybody know 160
Donybrook Jig 130
Down the Wagon Way 164
Down among the Dead Men 99, 120
Dream, The 66
Drop o' Beer 82, 123
Durham Pant-Wife's Petition to the Corporation, The 62
Exile of Erin 81-2, 124
Factory Lass, The 44-5, 53, 65, 75, 81, 91
Fare You Well, My Mary Ann 112
Far upon the Sea 81-2, 92, 113
Fat Boy, The 56
Fighting Fifth, The 163
Fighting Fusiliers, The 163
Fine Old English Gentleman 51-2, 58
Fire on the Kee, The 73-4, 129-30, 149, 152-3, 161, 164
First Mayor of South Shiels, The 25
Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O! = Who Hung the Monkey?
Flannel 164
Flowers of the Forest 164
Folks of Aud Shields, The 23, 63
£4.10; or Sailors' Strike 29, 62
Funny Time Comin', The 29
Gallowgate Hoppin' 65, 69, 75, 91
Gallowgate Lad, The 164
Gary Owen 17

Gateshead Lass's Lament, The 65, 68
Gee ho Dobbin 18, 47, 62
Geordie Haad the Bairn = Aw wish yor Muther wad cum
Geordie's letter frae Callerforney 65, 68
German Song = Lillie's a Lady
Gift o' the Gob 161, 164
God Save the Queen 89, 160
God speed ye all ye faithful band 35
Golden Glove, The 22
Goose Club, The 20, 41 149
Gossipin' Nan Todds 111
Go to bed early and save the coal 163
Grand Dialogue Song 81-2
Grappling for Perpetual Motion 81-2
Great Big Irish Stew 88
Great Meat Pie 99, 121
Greet Bull-Dog O' Shields 76, 130, 152
Gudeen to you kimmer 111
Hail Smiling Morn 35
Hairy Gobs! An' Fine Moosecatchers! 49-50, 53, 65, 75, 81, 91
Half Starved Youth, The 62
Hallelujah Chorus 89
Happy Keelman, The 19, 62
Hartley Calamity = The Queen has sent a Letter
Hawk, The 13, 130
Hawk Polka 10
He Wad Be a Noodle 18, 46, 48-9, 53, 62, 65, 75, 91, 145, 152, 155-6, 169
Hey Randy Dandy O 69
Hi! Bonnie Lassie 163
High Level, The 13
High Level and the Aud Bridge, The 58-9, 130, 147, 150-1, 153, 168
Hokey Pokey = The King of the Cannibal Isles
Horrid War I' Sangeyt, The 33, 48-9, 53
Horse Taming 89
'How cruel was that cannon ball …' 4
Hoy a hapenny oot *164*
Hurricane History 164
I'd be a Butterfly 21, 58
I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marbled Halls 42, 58
I Hear a Sailor 164
Imitation of the Bagpipes 81, 138
I'm Not Myself at All (Lover) 158
I tickled Mary *164*
It's awful to be oot o' "Brass" when neyne ont's comin in 103-4
Jack and I 160
Jeanette and Jeannotte 18, 62, 110
Jenny Jones 50
Jim Crow's Visit to Newcastle 11
Jimmy McKenny 4-5, 147
Jimmy Munro's Troubles 89, 111
Jocker = Wor Jocker
John Jones 59
Johnny Luik Up 132
Jolly Keelman 130
Jolly Ploughboy 99
Jolly Waggoner, The 18
Jonathan Brown 92
Jump Jim Crow 11
Just Like a Proper Copper 163
Keelman and the Grindstone 66
Keelmen in Difficulties 81-2
Keelman's Visit to the Cassel 66
Keel on Fire, The 42, 44, 53, 65, 91, 145
Keel Row 58-9, 82, 99, 120, 123, 164
Keep yor feet still, Geordie 164
Kelvin Grove 66
King of the Cannibal Isles, The 19, 33, 76, 97
Kipper'd Herring, The = *The Pitman and the Kippered Herring*
Laird o' Cockpen, The 66
Lambton Worm, The 161, 164
Lads o' Tyneside 66, 75, 91
Landing o' the Frenchers 49, 53
Lass that lives next door, The *164*
Lass that Loves a Sailor 82, 123
Last Neet 164
Let me the cannakin slink 164
Let's awa to the Bridal 19
Lillie's a Lady 53, 97
Lines inscribed to Richard Grainger 33
Lines on Christmas 57
Lord Bateman 22
Lord Lovell 22
Low Back'd Car, The 99, 121
Lucy Neal 67, 82, 92, 102, 119-20, 123
McCloud's Reel 82, 123
Mally's Dream 7
Mally, Dunn 164
March of the Cameron Men, The 97-8
Marquis of Waterford, The 10
Mary Blane 82, 123
Matt Brady 102-3
Maw Stepmother; or, Billy Bag the Glutton 48-9, 53, 62, 65, 75, 91
Maw Wonderful Wife 6
May Morning 160
Me little wife at hyem 164
Merrily Dance the Quaker's Wife 24
Merry Bells of England 61
Merry Haymakers 97-8
Messiah 35
Militia, The 18
Miller o' the Dee, The 103
Miss Bailey' Ghost 102
Miss Hunter's Hornpipe 10
Mistletoe Bough, The 39
Morpeth Jail 40
Musical Landlord's Fareweel 146
My Canny Wife 65, 68
My Lord 'Size 143
My Mary Ann 111
My Old Dutch 159
Nae Luck about the house 62
Nancy Dawson 66
Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me 82, 123, 146
Nan Todds on Gossipin' = Gossipin' Nan Todds
Ned Corvan 153-4
Nee place noo to play = The Toon Improvement Bill
Neibors doon belaa, The *164*
Newcassel Pluck 87, 111
Newcastle Fair 65-6
Newcastle Noodles, The 18
New Mayor of South Shields, The 23-4, 62
Nice Young Gal, The 56
Niddicombe Fair 163
98th, The 164
No Irish Need Apply 109, 116
Not the Baby, but the Bicycle 158
Of a' the girls = Sally in Our Alley
O' gin I had her 68
Oh! Bonnie Scotland 164
Oh! Heh ye seen wor Jimmy (Nelson) 161, 168-9
O, hev ye seen wor Jimmy (Corvan) 65, 67-8, 73, 75, 91, 114
O! Leuk a' the Sowlger 164
O Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me = Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me
Oh, no, we never mention her 21
Old Cliffs of Tynemouth = Cliffs of Old Tynemouth
Old Folks at Home 35
O, maw bonnie Nannie O 21
Oot O' Wark; or the Year '62 127-8, 130, 14
O, Susannah 21
Our Mary Ann, a Parody on My Mary Ann 111-13
Paanship Bleezin, The 164
Pally Jones = The Factory Lass
Parody on She Wore a Wreath of Roses 21
Patrick's Days 82, 123
Pat's Curiosity Shop 101
Pea Straw 81, 111-12
Peep at Newcassel 66-7, 75, 91
Peggy Pickin, doon the Shore 82, 123
Perfect Cure, The 151
Perils of the Mine 57, 111
Peter Peppercorn 56
Pitman and the Kippered Herring, The 41, 44, 53, 65, 75, 91, 130, 152
Pitman's Courtship, The 164
Pitman's Dream of Billy's Deeth, The 57-8

Pitman's farewell, The = Astrilly; or the Pitman's Farewell
Pitman's Pay, The 143
Pitmin's Advice tiv his Marras 93
Polly Parker, O 89
Poor Mary Ann 99, 120
Poor old Uncle Ned 82, 123
Pop goes the Weasel 83, 124
Porterpokeman's Lament, The 102, 118-19, 130
Prince Albert's Babby Hoose 51-3, 65, 75, 91
Queen Has Sent a Letter; Or Hartley Calamity 109, 116-17, 130, 136, 167, 169
Queen's Second Visit, The 6, 16, 51-3, 65, 75, 91
Queen's Visit to Cherbourg 92-4, 101, 131, 152
Queen's Visit to Newcastle, The 6
Rakes of Stony Batter, The = Bob and Joan
Relief of Lucknow 87
Rigs and Fun of Nottingham Goose Fair 141
Rise in Baccy, The 19, 22, 62
Rise in Coals, The 39-40, 44, 53, 65, 74-5, 91, 130, 147, 152-3
Robin Tamsan's Smiddy 6
Rosa Lee 20, 43
Robin Adair 164
Roslin Castle 148
Row upon the Stairs, The 164
Sailors' Strike, The 62
Sally in Our Alley 37
Sandgate Lass, The (Corvan) 39-40, 44, 81-2, 91, 138
Sandgate Lass, The (Nunn) 164
Sandhill Monkey, The 95
Sandy McLusky 164
Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled 82, 123
Seaman's Complaint 26
Seamen's Complaint 26
Seaman's Loyal Standard, The 27
Seamen's Strike, The 31
Shades Saloon, The 19-20
Sheffield Calamity, The 135
She Wore a Wreath of Roses 21
Ship on Fire, The 42
Sly Glance, The 127
Sly Old Fox 92
Sma' Coals = *The Rise in Coals*
Snooks the Artist 65, 68, 81, 91
Soup Kitchen 97-8, 111, 138, 145, 152
South Shields Corporation 30-1, 167
South Shore 154
Spence's Tent 10
Spider and the Fly, The 92
Sprig of Shillelah, The 23
South Shields Corporation 24
Stage-Struck Keelman, The 42, 44, 65, 75, 91, 145, 152
Sunday Mornin's Fuddle 111-12
Sunderland Volunteers 62-3
Sunny Banks of Scotland 44-5
Susan of the Valley 37, 60
Swaggering At The Races 46, 53, 65, 75, 91
Sweating System 21-2
Sword Dancer's Lament 111, 115
Talking Fish, The 94
Taste for the Drama, A 81-2
Teetotal Society 48, 62
'The Bridge is broken …' 10
There's a Good Time Coming 28, 30, 62
There's a Grand Time Comin 28
There's Nae Luck about the house = Nae Luck about the house
'The snow's like a shroud of silvery light …' 115
Thespian Rows 114
Tim Murphy the Boxer 101
Tinker's Wedding, The 22, 87, 96
Tom Johnson 17, 62, 65, 145
Tommy Carr's Adventures in Asstrilly 66, 75, 91, 145, 152
Tommy Carr's Letter 75, 81, 91, 153
Tom Sayers 97, 101, 111
Toon Improvement Bill, The 40, 42, 53, 65, 75, 91, 145, 152, 155, 169
Trab, Trab, Trab 91
Trip to Marsden Rock 48-9, 53, 65, 91
Trip to Warkworth 40
Twas in Trafalgar's Bay 73, 129
Twas on a Sunday Morning = Before the Bells do ring
Two Hundred Years to Come 64-5
Tyne Exile's Lament, The 150
Tyne Lads For Ever! 36, 50, 60
Tyneside Factory Lass = The Factory Lass
Tyneside Men 114
Tyneside Rhapsody
Unfortunate Man, The 44-5, 53, 65, 75, 91
Unfortunate Miss Bailey 102
Unfortunate Pe De 81-2
Unto us a child is born 89
Visit to Billy's Show 65-6
Wail o' the Fallen, The 150
Walker the Twopenny Postman 17
Warkworth Feast 40, 44, 53, 65, 75, 91, 145, 152-3, 155
We are the Odds and Ends 163
We Ha'e Nae Body Noo, Or, Granny's Lament 154
Weel May the Keel Row = Keel Row
'Weep not for me, my dearest friends …'
We're a' Noddin 111
We Sailed from the Downs 81
Weshin Day 164
What are ye gan to Stand 82, 123
What do People Marry for 56
What man would be without a woman? 21
Whin 164
Who Hung the Monkey? 96, 108, 130, 146, 148, 150, 152, 155-6, 162, 165-70
Whole Hog or None 146
Widow Winks 65, 67, 75, 91
Wife's Dream, The 6
William Tell 10
Willow, Willow, Waly 160
'Will ye buy ony fish ...' 52
Wind that shakes the barley
Wonderful Crocodile 99
Wonderful Tallygrip, The 22, 66
Wor Jocker 73-4, 129
Work for 1,000 Men 110-11
World turned Upside Down, The 20
Wor Nanny's a mazor 164
Wor Tyneside Champions 90, 145, 152
Wrang train agyen 161, 164
XYZ 22, 24
Yankee Doodle 46-7, 59
Ye deils Buckie 82, 123
Yer Gannin' to be a Keelman 18, 62, 147-8, 170
Zip Coon 27-8, 62

Name Index

A., B. 153
Adams, Bill (fiddler) 4
Adams, William Edward (*Chronicle*) 134-6, 156
Aesop 92
Akenside, Mark 57
Akrigg, PC
Alabama Minstrels 87, 93, 116
Albert, Prince 6, 46, 52 58, 63, 92
Aldina, Josephine 84
Alexandrovna, Maria
Alfred, Prince 147
Allan, Alice 143
Allan, Ann 143
Allan, Annie 143
Allan, Edward 130
Allan, Elizabeth 143
Allan, George 130-1, 143, 152, 154, 156
Allan, Isabella 143
Allan, Mary Elizabeth 143
Allan, Nicholas 143
Allan, Ralph senior 131, 136, 139, 143, 145-6, 154
Allan, Ralph junior 143
Allan, Samuel 143
Allan, Thomas 45, 129-32, 136-7, 139, 143, 145-6, 150-2, 154, 156, 161-2, 165, 167, 170
Allan, William 143, 152, 154
Allen, Elizabeth 47-8
Allen, Frank 154
Allen, John 48, 71
Allen, Peter (1762-) 47
Allen, Peter (1799-) 47-8
Alexandrovna, Maria 147
Amos, Inspector 139
Anderson, Isabella –> Arrowsmith
Anderson, Mary 30-1
Anderson, Superintendent 149
Anderson, William 30
Andrews, William 150
Archbold, Mr E.D. 150, 153
Armstrong, Annie –> Annie Allan senior
Armstrong, Archie 167
Armstrong, Edward 143
Armstrong, Elizabeth 143
Armstrong, Ralph 9
Armstrong, Thomas 132
Armstrong, William (songwriter) 66, 95
Armstrong, William (manufacturer) 101, 157, 164
Arrowsmith, Isabella (1799-) 30-1, 101
Arrowsmith, Isabella (1828-) -> Corvan
Arrowsmith, Robert (1801-) 30-1
Arrowsmith, Robert (1826-) 30
Arrowsmith, Thomas 30-1, 101
Arthey, Vin 170
Arthur, James 36
Arundale, Rachel -> Grainger
Ascherberg & Co., Messrs 161
Ashcroft, Mr J.L. 133
Atkin, Dorothy 46, 56
Atkin, Robert 6, 46-7, 55-6
Atkinson, Mr (musician) 133
Atkinson, Emma 151
Atkinson, Mary Ann 157
B., Miss Julie 38
Bache, Emilie –> Stanley
Baden-Powell, Sir Robert 163
Bagnall, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Bagnall, Ann 35
Bagnall, Joshua Innes 18, 22, 55-6, 135-6, 139-40, 142-3, 147
Baird, John Foster 2
Balfe, Michael William 42
Balmbra, Isabella 35
Balmbra, John 7, 15, 35-8, 55, 66-8, 74, 77, 64-5, 87, 89-90, 92-9, 105-8, 110, 113, 116, 130, 132, 135-6, 170
Barker, John 150
Barlow, Mary Bell 148
Barnard, Mr 92
Barrass, Christopher 150
Barrington Brass Band 94, 97, 99
Barron, George junior 151
Barron, George Charlton 149-51
Barton, Margaret 165, 167
Bass, David 26
Bates, Mr 90
Baxter, Mr 130
Bayly, Nathaniel Thomas Haynes 21, 39
Baynes, Mary –> Edington
Beattie, Superintendent 149
Beeby, Sarah -> Corven
Beechey, Frederick William 28, 30-1
Bell, Mr (circus proprietor) 93
Bell, Martha I 134
Bell, Martha II 134, 137, 148
Bell, Mr R.P. 137
Bell, Stuart Henry 134, 137-8, 147-9, 151, 154
Bendigo (William Abendnego Thompson) 97, 101
Benjamin, Mr 97
Bennehan, Sophia –> Catcheside
Bennett, William Sterndale 164
Bergna, Mr 5
Bickerstaff, Isaak 103
Billings, Mrs 74
Billings, John, 74, 78, 133
Binks, Prudence 39, 141
Bishop, Sir Henry 39, 87
Black, Mrs 141
Blakey, William Walter 136, 139-40, 142-3, 147
Blamphin, Mr J., Mrs & Masters, 15, 20
Blondin, Charles 107
Boagey, Mr W. 168
Bolam, Ellen 37
Booth, Mr J.W. 15, 18-20, 35, 37-8
Booth, Mrs 37
Boucicault, Dion
Boutland, Miss 89, 113
Boutland, Thomas 30, 89, 93
Bowman, Daniel 112
Boyd, Mr 140
Boz's Juba (William Henry Lane) 11, 15
Braban, Ann 35
Brandling, Charles John 17
Brandling, John 8
Brandling, Robert William 8
Bright, John 143
Britton, Dr R. 149
Brockett, John Trotter 143
Brockett, William Henry 140
Brown, Mr (bowler) 90
Brown, Bill (actor) 6
Brown, William (singer) 35, 85
Brown, William Wells 14
Browning, Mr F. 141
Bruce, Mr (solicitor) 149
Bruce, John Collingwood 93, 161
Brunel, Isambard Kingdom 87-8
Buglass, Superintendent 78
Bunn, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Bunn, Alfred 42
Burdon, Mr 70
Burke, Richard 33
Burns, Peter 167
Burns, Robert 21-2, 49, 63, 111, 143
Burt, Amelia -> Grainger
Burton, Mr 70
Byron, George Gordon 75
Caesar, Julius 90
Calder, Maggie 161

Calhoun, Francis 37
Cameron, Robert 149
Campbell, Sir Colin 82
Campbell, Mary 35
Campbell, Peter 77
Campbell, Robert 90
Campbell, William 15, 22-3, 25, 35, 38, 54-5, 77-8, 84-5
Candlish, James 52, 60
Carey, Henry 37
Carlisle, Joseph 143
Carmichael, John Wilson 87, 95
Carr, John (godfather) 1
Carr, John (publisher) 143
Carr, Skipper 130
Carter, Mr J.P. 67
Catcheside, Ada 157, 162
Catcheside, Annie 157-8, 160
Catcheside, Bertha 157-8
Catcheside, Charles Ernest (Catchy) 157-66, 169
Catcheside, Mr E. = Charles Catcheside
Catcheside, George 157
Catcheside, George F. 157
Catcheside, Helen Edith 160, 162-3
Catcheside, Mr J.J.H. 162
Catcheside, Louisa May 157, 166
Catcheside, Mabel 160
Catcheside, Mary 157
Catcheside, Mona 157-8, 160
Catcheside, Robert senior 157
Catcheside, Robert Marium 157-60, 162
Catcheside, Sophia 157
Catcheside-Warrington = Charles Catcheside
Ceda, Mr & Family 51, 63-4, 114
Chambers, Robert (Bob) 90-1, 131, 135-6
Chaplin, Sid 170
Chapman, Miss 99
Chater, John W. 108, 143
Chevalier, Albert 159
Chicken, Mr 101
Christy Minstrels 35, 93, 116, 133
Clark, Mr (murderer) 108
Clark, Mr (venue proprietor) 56, 64
Clarke, John 16
Clasper, Harry 60, 90-1
Clay, John 23, 25, 31, 35, 48, 62
Clayton, John 2, 93
Cleghorn, Bill 101
Clerk, Edward 161
Cleveland, Mr & Mrs 136
Clough, Tom 164-5
Coates, Peter 170
Cobley, Edward 101
Coleman, Mr R.H. 100
Colinetti, Mr 133
Collins, Margaret 105
Collins, Sam 158
Collis & Flitcroft, Messrs 84
Colman, George 102
Columbus, Cristoforo 39
Congo Melodists 92
Cook, William 70
Copeland, William 10
Corvan/Corven/Corvin, Edward (1827-) 1, 3-7, 15-25, 28-31, 36-7, 39-53, 55, 57-69, 71, 73-105, 108-39, 141, 144-56, 161, 164, 166-7, 169-70
Corvan, Edward (1860-) 98, 101, 133, 143-5, 148-9, 151, 156, 168
Corvan, Isabella (1828-) 30-1, 42, 76-8, 85-6, 98, 113-216, 128, 138, 141, 143, 148-51, 155
Corvan, Isabella (Bella) (1855-) -> Wilkes
Corvan, Mary Jane -> Errington
Corven, Mary 104
Corven, Sarah senior 68, 104
Corven, Sarah junior 156
Corven/Corvin, Thomas (1826-) 1, 68, 104
Corven, Thomas (New South Wales) 156
Corven, Thomas (Rhodesia) 156
Corven, William Thomas 104
Corvin, Margaret 1-3, 31, 89
Corvin, Matthew (1792-) 1-2, 31
Corvin, Matthew (1831-) 1-2, 68, 116
Cosgrove, Bridget 163
Cosgrove, Daniel 167
Cosgrove, Isabella 163, 167
Cosgrove, John 163
Cosgrove Trio 163
Costello, Mr J. 15, 18-21, 35
Coulson, Mr 109-10, 123-4
Court Minstrels 157
Cousins, Inspector 101
Coverdale, William 98
Cowell, Sam 48, 87, 113, 133
Cowen, Joseph 108, 135, 137, 140
Coxon, Mr 50
Crabtree, Mr 85
Craike, Mr 1
Cravelli, Mr G.J. 147
Crawley, Peter 101
Creighton, Helen 167
Crib, Tom 97
Crockett, Mr 101
Crony, Kate 163
Crossthwaites, Messrs 150
Crow, Jim 11
Cuckoo Jack (John Wilson) 20, 39, 52, 98-9, 120-2
Cuff, Jim 11
Culshaw, Margaret 1
D. (songwriter) 68
Daniels, Bebe 167
Danvers, Mr E. 141
Dauce, Margaret 157
Dauce, Mary Jane 157
Davidson, William 132
Davis, Edward Dean 105
Davy, Humphrey 57
Dawson, Mr G. 100
Dawson, William Henderson 143
Day, Mr W. 141
Dearlove, Mr & Mrs 85
Deaton, Sergeant 156
Derbyshire, Joseph Watson 13, 133
Desborough, Juliet 135
Dibdin, Charles 92
Dick, Ranter 32-4
Dickens, Charles (Boz) 11, 18, 51
Dickinson, Thomas 27
Dixon, Mr (merchant) 93
Dixon, Graham 170
Dixon, Jemima 139
Dobby, Robert 28-9, 37
Dobrowski, Mr 159
Dobson, Craftsman E.H. 167
Dodds, Jamieson 165
Dodds, Mr J.R. 166
Dodds, Mary –> Catcheside
Dodds, PC 33
Dodds, Thomas 3, 46
Donald, Adam Elphinstone 105-6, 108, 134-6, 140
Donald, Margaret Forster 105
Donelly, Mr J. 147
Douglas, Mr & Mrs
Douglas, Isabella 153
Douglass, Mr (criminal) 99
Douglass, Frederick 14
D'Oyley Carte Opera Company 161
Drysdale, Alexander 138
Ducrow, Andrew 107
Duffy, Daniel 2
Dundee 93
Duncan, George 147
Dunhill, Mr 164
Dunn, Miss 150
Dusoni, Thomasi 98, 100, 108
Dwight, Mr & Mrs 78, 114
Dyer, John 99
Easthope, Charles 37, 84, 87, 105

Easthope, Margaret 105
Edington, James Stead 87, 153
Edington, Mary 153
Edison, Thomas 150, 159-60
Elder, Winnie 163
Eldon (*Chronicle*) 166-8
Element, Mr 85
Elfin (Sidney Miles Hawkes) 108, 113, 116, 135, 138, 151-2, 156
Elliott, Daniel 107
Elliott, Stephen 74, 76-7, 84-5
Ellis, Mary Ann –> Wilkes
Elizabeth, Queen 82, 124
Eltringham, Elizabeth 105
Embleton, Benjamin 46
Emery, Robert 6, 17, 40, 53, 66, 145-7
Emmett, Daniel 11, 90
English, George Edwin 158
Ephison, Mr 158
Errington, Edward 143
Errington, John George 143, 148, 151, 154-6
Errington, Mary Jane 86, 101, 138, 143, 147-8, 151-2, 156, 166
Errington, Robert 156
Erskine, William 85
Ethiopian Serenaders 11
Eugénie de Montijo 89
Everatt, Mr 53, 143
Fairclough, Thomas 1
Fairles, Mr (quay owner) 70
Fairles, Nicholas 9
Fanque, Pablo 132
Fawell, Mr 71
Fawkes, Guy 24
Female Christy Minstrels 114, 149
Fenwick, Arthur J, 166
Fergusson, William 143
Ferry & Foster, Messrs 160
Fife, Sir John 132
Fifefield, William 10
Fisher, Thomas 1
Fletcher, Mr (clog dancer) 112
Fletcher, Mr 9arranger) 164
Fordyce, Thomas 11, 48, 95
Fordyce, William 11, 95
Forester, Alec 169
Forest Hall Male Voice Choir 161
Forster, Mr 77
Fortune, John A. 167-8
Foster, Eric = Charles Catcheside
Foster, Stephen 21, 35
Fox, Charles 141
Fox, Dr W.J.D. 155
France, Peter 25, 53, 143
Franklin, Sir John 39
Fraser, John 150
French, Jacob 5
Frost, Mr 2
Gale, Anne 161
Gale, Jane –> Windows
Garibaldi, Giuseppe 108
Gatenby, Miss 150
Gattis, William 10
Gavazzi, Signor 135
Gibbons, Mary Ann 35
Gibson, Dewey 165
Gibson, William Wilfred 164
Gilbert, John 46, 53, 65
Gilchrist, Robert 145-6
Gillies, George 31
Gillings, David John (George Mozart) 157-9, 168
Ging, Joe 170
Gladstone, William 102, 118-19, 130, 133, 143
Glasgow, Alex 170
Glen, Mr J. 15
Glen, Thomas 15, 22, 55
Glynn, Edward 93, 107, 140
Goggans, Philip 144
Gowdy, Louisa May -> Catcheside
Graham, Frank 169
Grainger, Amelia 2
Grainger, George 2
Grainger, Rachel 2
Grainger, Richard 2, 33
Grainger, Sophia 33
Grainger, Thomas 2
Grant, Mr (pugilist) 97
Grant, William 68
Gray & Gladstone, Messrs 150
Greaves, Mr 35
Gregson, Keith 170
Grey, Earl 88, 169
Grierson, Mr 107
Grieve, Mabel -> Catcheside
Hair, Thomas 8
Hall & Davis, Messrs (Funny Blacks) 135
Hall, Elizabeth 35
Hall, Henry 134
Hall, James 144
Hall, Martin 144
Hall, William 15, 35
Hammond, Edward (Ned) 141
Hamond, Mr 139
Händel, George Frideric 35, 89
Handford, Henry 84-5
Handford, Tom 84-5, 108, 132, 135
Handle, Johnny (John Pandrich) 170
Harcourt, Julia 85
Harker, Dave 170
Harle, Mr 90
Harris, Mrs (correspondent) 93
Harris, Helen Edith –> Warrington
Harrison, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Harrison, Elizabeth 144
Harrison, James 167
Harrison, Mr & Mrs Paddy 133
Harrison, Rowland (Rowley) 144
Harrison, Thomas 31
Hartford, Meg 169
Hartford, Mike 169
Hartley, Miss 137
Hastie, Mr J.W. 95
Hastie, Mr W. 95
Haswell, George 27, 52
Hawkes, Emily 108
Hawks, Messrs 45
Hawthorn, Messrs 45
Headlam, Thomas 74
Heenan, John 97, 101
Hellan, Mr 84
Henderson, Robert 149
Henderson, Roy 164
Hepburn, Thomas 27
Heslop, Richard Oliver (Harry Haldane) 152, 161
Hetherington, Edward 161
Hexham, Bishop of 165
Hey, Mr E.H. 89
High Level Ranters 170
Hill, Jimmy) 10-11, 13, 22-3, 37-8, 148, 154, 170
Hill, Sarah 10, 37
Hind, Maud Francis –> Windows
Hobson, Mr J. 140
Hodgkin, Mr 149
Hodgson, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Hodgson, Ralph 137
Hogg, Alderman 165
Hogg, James 99
Holland, Reverend 135
Holst, Gustav 164
Hood, Thomas 167
Horne, Thomas 8
Howard, Robert 38-9, 47, 50-1, 53, 55, 77
Howe, Elias 69
Hudson, George 59
Hudson, Thomas 17
Humble, Charles 105

Hunter, Sarah –> Hill
Hunter, William (licensee) 37
Hunter, William (correspondent) 169
Huster, Mr 138
Hutchinson, Joseph 133
Hutchinson Family 19
Hymer, Miss 85
Ingham, Robert 37
Ingledew, Alderman 99
Jack the Blaster 47-8
James, Annie 137
Jamieson, Margaret Forster –> Donald
Jennings, Mr 148
Jervis, John 26
Jobling, William 9
Johnny Lookup (John Higgins) 63, 68
Johnson, Miss M. 133
Johnson, Mr (singer) 35
Johnson, William 8
Jones, Aaron 97, 101
Jones, Ernest 25
Jones, Helen 1
Jones, Mr J. (engineer) 141
Jones, Mr J. (singer) 15, 23
Jordan, Samuel 4
Joseph, Barnet 5-6
Joseph, Fanny 5
Joyce, Lawrence 149
Kean, Charles 42
Kelley, Margaret 35
Kelly, Thomas 149
Kennedy, Mr T. 68
King, Mr 101
Kinsella, Dr H.S. 168
Kirkham, Thomas 15
Knight, Joseph Philip 21
Kossuth, Lajos 137
Kücken, Friedrich 91
Labouchere, Henry 30
Lambert, Mr 90
Lambert, Mary 89
Langham, Nat 101
Langley, John 144
Lawrence, Mr (singer) 35
Lawrence, Professor & Madame 84
Lawson, Fred 169
Lawson, William 145
Leifchild, John 8
Leumane, Clarence Mather 161
Liddell, Henry 37
Lind, Jenny 5, 39
Lingford, Joseph 168
Linskill, William 24-5, 29
Lisle, Nannie 166
Little, PC Ralph 99
Livermore, Ada –> Catcheside
Livermore, Horace 157-60
Livermore, Lechmere 157-60
Londonderry, Lady 163
Londonderry, Marquess of 27, 47
Longstaff, James 8
Lonza, Frederic 116
Lord, Mr 83-4
Lord, Master J.W. 83
Lowes, Sergeant J.W. 149
Lowry, Messrs 141
Lowry, Reverend E.P. 158
Lowthian, Mr H. 93
Lundi, Mr F.G. 158
Lyle, Thomas 66
Lyon, Ben 167
McAnulty, Mr 149
McCartney, William 2
M'Coll, Hugh 28, 30-1, 37
McConville, Tom 170
McDermott, Mr G.H. 158
MacDougal, Mr (flautist) 94, 112-13
McDougal, Mr (fiddler) 112
MacEwan, Mr 164
Macfarren, Mr 164
McGee, Ann 35
McGee, Patrick 148
McGibbon, Annie –> Catcheside
McGibbon, James 157, 160
McGregor, Mr 90
McGuckin, Vincent 167
M'Intyre, Annie 139
Mackay, Charles 28, 63
M'Kenna, Michael 135
McKenny, James (Jimmy) 3-5, 147
McKenny, Mary 3
Mackey, Mr 58, 102, 118-19, 130
Mackey, Joseph 101, 118
McPherson, Mr D. 161
Mace, Jim 101
Malakoff, Duc de 92
Mallet, Mr 97
Marks, Mr, 137
Marsden, Mary 157
Marten/Martin, Kate 15, 22-3, 94
Martin, Mr E. 158
Martin, John (artist) 79
Martin, John (lyricist) 68
Marwood, Thomas 69
Mason, James 143
Mather, James 28
Matthews, Tom 3
Matthews, Charles 51
Mazzini, Giuseppe 108, 137
Mellor, Yankee 7
Mercer, Mr 78
Merchant, Benjamin 148
Metcalf, John 56
Midford/Mitford 23-4, 55, 145-6
Milburn, Mr J.H. 147
Miller, Mr (creditor)
Millicent, Misses A. & M. 37
Millicent, Mr J. 37
Mitford, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Moffatt, Alderman
Moffatt, John 71
Moffat, Mr G. 71
Moore, Catherine Elizabeth 157
Moore, James 37
Moralee, John 155
Morrison, James 18
Mould, Harry 155
Mozarts 158-9
Muir, Jimmy 165
Mumford, Mr 164
Murray, Mr (shopkeeper) 53
Murray, Mr J. 35
Murray, Mary Ann 153
Murray, William Wilson 62
Musgrave, Mr C.J. 155
Musgrave, John 155
Nairne, Carolina 66
Napoleon Bonaparte 96
Napoleon III, Emperor Louis 89, 92, 108, 137
Natt, Driver R.J. 167
Neal, Thomas 2
Nelson, Harry 161, 168
Nelson, Horatio 26, 114
Nelson, Peter 155
Nelson, William 95-6
Newbold, Mr 101
Newcastle Volunteers' Band 116
Newton, Mr 37
New York Christy Minstrels 35
Nicholas, Czar 63, 67
Nickleson, Geordie 112, 130
Noon, Jerry 101
Nunn, Robert (Bobby) 44-5, 53, 68, 82
Oats, Bill 63

O'Connor, Feargus 27
Odd Man Out 166-7
Odds & Ends Troupe 163
O'Figg, Jim 97
O'Gilvie, John 35-6
O'Hara, Dr J.E. 151
O'Heugh, John 168
Oliver, William 145-6
Oppenheimer Brothers 161
Original African Opera Troupe 114, 116
Ormsby, Miss 137
Ormston, Jane 21
Owen, Robert 3
Oxford Galleries Dance Band 165
Paddock, Tom 101
Paganini, Niccolo 137, 148
Palmer, Roy 170
Palmerston, Henry 108
Parnell, Mr W. 141
Parry, John 51
Pastor, Tony 109
Patterson, Mrs 167
Paul, John Dean 90
Paxton, W., & Co. 164
Pearson, Joseph 2
Peel, Dolly 23-4
Peel, Ralph 24
Pemberton, Messrs 61
Peter the Great 63
Pianori, Giovanni 108
Pigg, John 35
Pilkington, Mr N.G. 31
Place, Tom 23
Plant, James 93
Plumb, William 144
Plumpton, Mr 87
Pollard, Mr 105
Poole, John F. 109
Popham, Hugh 158
Pounder, John 150
Powlson, Harry 101
Pringle, Frankie 112
Pritchard, John 135
Procter, John 80-1, 83, 95
Procter, John Kirtley 95
Procter, William Mowbray 95
Proudlock, Lewis 154
Proudlock, Margaret 154
Purvis, Miss S. 151
Purvis, Thomas 101
Purvis, William (Billy) (showman) 3, 6-7, 15-16, 22, 37, 42, 45-6, 51, 53, 57-8, 62, 64-6, 71, 78-81, 93, 97, 100, 113-14, 135-6, 138, 144, 147, 151, 154, 166-8, 170
Purvis, William (Blind Willie) 39
Raine, Mr 161
Raleigh, Sir Walter 82, 124
Randall, Mr R. 56
Ransford, Edward 64
Ratcliffe, Mr T.A. 93
Rea, Mr 150
Reay, Samuel 164
Rede, Mrs Leman 11
Reed, Archibald 55
Reid, Andrew 161
Rembrandt Van Rijn 134
Renwicks, Mr 101
Rewcastle, James 13-14, 35, 56
Rewcastle, Mary 14, 35
Reynolds, Martha –> Martha Bell II
Ricardo, John 76
Rice, Thomas Dartmouth 10-11
Richardson, John 137
Ridley, George 101, 130, 132, 135, 144-6, 160, 165
Ridley, Mr R.B. 77
Riley, Mr E. 11
Ritchie, John 135
Roberts, Master & Miss 85
Roberts, William Prowting 3
Robie, Miss 84
Robinson, Dr George 14
Robson, Mr (builder) 105
Robson, Mr (singer) 35
Robson, Mr (swindler) 90
Robson, Ellen 5
Robson, Henry 26
Robson, Isabella 5, 33, 93, 101, 142-3
Robson, John Bergna 5, 33, 142
Robson, Joseph Philip (Retiort Keelman) 5-7, 16, 18, 21-2, 25, 28, 33-5, 40, 43, 55-6, 68-9, 78, 86, 93, 101, 107-9, 140, 142-7, 150-1, 154
Robson, Joseph junior 5
Robson, Robert William 5, 33, 142-3
Rodgers, Alexander 6
Roebuck, John Arthur 109
Rosendale, Jane 35
Rosendale, Mary -> Campbell
Ross, Mr J.W. (musician) 84
Ross, John (printer) 6-7, 18, 21-2, 46, 65, 75
Ross, Mr W. 143
Ross-Lewin, Canon 163
Rough Robin 4
Roull, Jane 35
Rowan, Mr 90
Rowe, James 135
Rudd, Leonard Clifford 152
Ruddock, John 152
Russell, Henry 28, 51, 63
Russell, John 26-7
Ryan, Joseph 132
S---n, Geordie 112
S-d-rs, Mr 111
Sacred Harmonic Society 44
Sahib, Nana 87
Saint, Mr 90
St. Hilda's Colliery Band 165
Salmon, Robert 89
Samuel, Joseph 100
Sanders, Mr 111
Sanderson, Mr 37
Sandford, James 92
Sanger, George & John 105
Sapphrini 137
Sayers, Thomas (publican) 114
Sayers, Tom (pugilist) 97, 101, 111
Scaify, Mr 112
Scarlett, John 143
Scatter, J.C. (James Cosgrove) 163, 165, 167
Scott, Professor (John Henry Anderson) 4-5
Scott, Bob 130
Scott, William 144
Sedcole, James 151
Sefton, Mr 90
Selkirk, James 36, 50
Sessford, Bob 68, 111
Sessford, John 15, 35, 37-8, 51, 78, 84, 87, 94, 97, 99-100, 105, 116
Sessford, Mary 105
Seth, Jenny 21
Shakespeare, William 42, 52, 63, 107
Shearer, Mr 140
Sheldon, Ernest = Robert Catcheside
Shield, John 143, 145-6
Shortridge, Richard 23-4
Siddall, Samuel Broadbent 147, 149
Sinclair, Mr 134, 138-9
Skipsey, Joseph 147
Smith, Mr (pianist) 37
Smith, Alexander 33
Smith, Mr C.S. 155
Smith, Hugh 89, 92, 107, 141-2
Smith, John (shipwright) 5
Smith, John Embleton 40, 46, 136
Smith, W.H. 168
Snowball, Mr 86
South Shields Meister Minstrels 160
Spence, John 10-11

Spiers, James H. 37, 78, 80-1, 83, 89, 92-3, 113, 133, 137, 150
Spoor, Bobby 13, 35, 112, 132-3
Spring, Tom (Thomas Winter) 97
Springthorpe, Mr 84
Stainless Stephen (Arthur Clifford Baynes) 165
Stanley, Emilie 105, 116
Stanley, George William 105-8, 110, 113, 116, 132-6, 139-41, 155
Stanley, Ruth 139
Stanley, Samuel 105
Stansfield, James 108
Stead, James Henry 135, 151
Stephenson, Messrs 45
Stephenson, Charles Henry 3
Stephenson, John Atlantic 114
Stephenson, William 95
Stevenson, Bobby 13, 112-13
Stewart, Miss 85
Stewart, Mr (musician) 133
Stewart, Sarah 39
Stewart, William (Carlisle) 6, 53
Stewart, William (Newcastle) 39, 34, 39-45, 47-53, 74-5, 91, 110
Stobbs, Ellen 5
Stobbs, Isabella –> Isabella Robson
Stokoe, John 148, 153, 161, 164
Story, Mr 106
Stowe, Harriet Beecher 63
Summers, Mr 93
Summerson, Sergeant 85
Sutherland, James 64
Swallow, Mr 93
Swan, Thomas 98
Tate, George 111
Taylor, Elijah 134
Taylor, Frances 78
Taylor, Mr H. 132
Taylor, James 149
Taylor, John 37, 130, 144
Temple, Simon 8
Tennyson, Alfred 158
Terry, Richard Runciman 164
Thomas, Dan 101
Thompson, Mr (bill-sticker) 135
Thompson, Mr (singer) 153
Thompson, Bobby 170
Thompson, Charles Pelham 95
Thompson, George Horatio (Hillar) 114
Thompson, Jane 135
Thompson, Lydia 107
Thompson, Miss M. 37
Thompson, Thomas (printer) 57
Thompson, Thomas (songwriter)
Thompson, William (Billy) 15, 23, 25, 35, 37-8, 55, 58, 69, 86, 93, 107-8, 114, 134-8, 140-2, 144
Thornton, Frances 8-10
Thornton, John 8
Thornton, Richard (1802-) 8-10, 12 13
Thornton, Richard (Dick) (1839-) 8-10, 12-13, 112, 154
Tiley, James 133
Tilley, Vesta 150
Tipton Slasher 97, 101
Todd, Ralph 167, 169
Tomlinson, William Weaver 150
Travers, Bob 101
Turnbull, Annie 161
Turnbull, Robert 10
Turnbull, Driver W. 163
Turpin 113
Tute, John 133
Vamps, Hugo 93
Vasey, Thomas 150
Victoria, Princess 89
Victoria, Queen 5-6, 16, 26-7, 52, 74, 87, 92-3, 109-10, 116-17, 130, 135-6, 167, 169
Vincent, Mr C.V.H. 169
Virginia Minstrels 11, 19
Von Haynau, Julius Jacob 24
Wade, Miss 84
Wales, Nelly 4
Walker, Johnny 101
Walker, Margaret 65
Walker, William (thief) 144
Walker, William Reay (printer) 65, 68, 74-5, 90, 110-11, 137
Wallace, Mr W. 164
Wallingford, Mr F.
Walters, Ralph 110
Ward, Francis 156
Ward, Mr J. (venue proprietor) 93
Ward, Mrs J. (venue proprietor) 94, 97
Ward, Jim (pugilist) 97, 101
Ward, Robert 143
Ward, William 149
Wardle, Mr G. 69
Wardle, Harry 90
Warrington, Annie = Annie Catcheside
Warrington, Charles = Charles Catcheside
Warrington, Ernest = Charles Catcheside
Warrington, Helen Edith = Helen Edith Catcheside
Warrington, Mr W. = Charles Catcheside
Waterford, Marquess of 10
Watson, George 21
Weatherley, Dennis 169
Welford, Richard 151, 154
Wellington, Duke of 114, 144
West Hartlepool Operatic & Dramatic Society 169
Wheeler, William (Billy) 144
White, Mr (runner) 90
White, Robert 36
White, Thomas 91, 131
Whitfield, Harry 133
Whitfield, Roger 7, 15, 18-20, 35, 37
Whittaker, William Gillies 164-5
Wilkes, Amy 153, 156
Wilkes, Isabella (1855-) 30-1, 42, 76-8, 80, 85-6, 92, 98, 101, 113-16, 128, 133-4, 138, 141, 143-4, 148-9, 151, 153, 155-6
Wilkes, Isabella junior 153, 156
Wilkes, Mary Ann 148
Wilkes, Samuel (1814-) 148, 150
Wilkes, Samuel (1843-) 148, 155-6
Wilkes, Samuel (1890-) 151, 153, 156
Wilkes, Thomas 148, 153, 156
Williams, Mr 51
Williamson, Mr H. (printer) 68
Williamson, Hedworth 47
Willis, George 86
Wilson, John (solicitor) 150
Wilson, John Mackay (writer) 75
Wilson, Joseph (Joe) 137, 143-5, 151-4, 170
Wilson, Mr M. 35
Wilson, Thomas 143
Wilton, John 97
Windows, Fanny 161
Windows, Jane 161
Windows, Hedley 161
Windows, James Gale 161-70
Windows, Joseph 161
Windows, Maud Francis 161
Windows, Maurice 161
Winsley, Mary 35
Wood, Robert 169-70
Wood, Walter 155
Woodman, Margaret 157
Woodmass, Harold 165
Wright, Mr (story teller) 153
Wright, Jacky 24
Wylam Band 35
Wynn, Mr T. 133, 140
Young, Miss 85
Young, Mr (sculptor) 135
Young, Mr (singer) 85
Young, Cecilia 15
Young, James 144
Young, Jane senior 137
Young, Jane junior 137
Young, Jonathan Lewis 159-62

Dave Harker

Dave was born in Guisborough in the North Riding of Yorkshire in 1946. He won a scholarship to Guisborough Grammar School in 1958 and went on to Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1966. His Director of Studies was Raymond Williams and one of his supervisors was the postgraduate Terry Eagleton. Dave was awarded a BA in 1969 and began postgraduate research, nominally under the supervision of John Holloway of Queens' College, but when he became a Senior Scholar at University College, Cambridge, in 1970 he asked to be supervised by David Craig of Lancaster University. Dave escaped from Cambridge to Newcastle for a year, and married, but had to return. In 1972 he declined a fellowship at a Cambridge college and, to the chagrin of senior members of what had become Wolfson College he accepted a temporary lectureship at Manchester Polytechnic. He felt that he was just passing through, pending a return to Newcastle, but was active in the Polytechnic branch of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutes. Michael was born in 1973. In 1976, to Dave's surprise, Cambridge University accepted his PhD thesis, 'Popular Song and Working-Class Consciousness in North-East England.' He became Senior Lecturer in Trade Union Studies at Manchester Polytechnic in 1982 and built two miners' supports groups in 1984-5, then became a Senior Lecturer in English in 1986. In the 1990s he was an officer of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Education branch at what had become Manchester Metropolitan University, but he retired in 2000 to get more involved in education. He was the founding secretary of the North West Retired Members' Branch of what was now the University and College Union and an officer of Manchester Trades Union Council. In 2015 he moved to Newcastle, 43 years after he had hoped to do so.

Dave has published 11 books so far.

Cat-Gut Jim the Fiddler. Ned Corvan's Life & Songs (Newcastle: Wisecrack Publications, 2017).
Building the Old Bolsheviks, 1881-1903 (www.marxists.org/history/ussr/events/revolution/index.htm 2016).
Gannin' to Blaydon Races! The Life and Times of George Ridley (Newcastle: Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2012).
The Flying Pickets. *The 1972 builders' strike and the Shrewsbury trials* (with Dave Ayre, Reuben Barker, Jim French & Jimmy Graham), (London: The Des Warren Trust Fund, 2008).
Tressell: The Real Story of 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' (London: Zed Books, 2003; Manila: Ibon Books, 2004).
Songs and Verse of the North East Pitmen, c.1780-1844 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1999).
Fakesong: the Manufacture of British 'folksong,' 1700 to the present day, 1985).
Songs from the Manuscript Collection of John Bell (Durham: Surtees Society, 1985).
One for the Money: politics and popular song (London: Hutchinson, 1980).
The Big Red Song Book (with Mal Collins & Geoff White), (London: Pluto Press, 1977 and 1981; University of Michigan Press, 1982).
George Ridley, Gateshead Poet and Vocalist (Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1973).

Dave edited the Open University Press 'Popular Music in Britain' series, which included his *Fakesong*.

Niall Mackinnon, *The British Folk Scene: musical performance and social identity*, 1994.
Dick Bradley, *Understanding Rock'n'roll: popular music in Britain 1955-1964*, 1992.
Allan Moore, *Rock: the primary text. Developing a musicology of rock*, 1992.
Trevor Herbert, *Bands: the Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th centuries*, 1991.
Paul Oliver, *Black Music in Britain: essays on the Afro-Asian contribution to popular music*, 1990.
Derek Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: songs of the Victorian drawing room and parlour*, 1989.
Mike Pickering & A.E. Green, *Everyday Culture: popular song and the vernacular milieu*, 1987.
Peter Bailey, *Music Hall: the business of pleasure*, 1986.
J.S. Bratton, *Music Hall: performance and style*, 1986.
Dave Laing, *One Chord Wonders: power and meaning in punk rock*, 1985.
Dave Harker, *Fakesong: the Manufacture of British 'folksong,' 1700 to the present day*, 1985).

Dave has also published several articles about north east English working-class history and culture.

Their Geordies and Ours,' Part 2, *North East Labour History* (Newcastle: North East Labour History Society, 2014), Vol 45, 187-215.
'Their Geordies and Ours,' Part 1, *North East Labour History* (Newcastle: North East Labour History Society, 2014), Vol 44, 169-89.
'Joe Wilson: "comic dialectical singer" or class traitor?' in J.S. Bratton, *Music Hall: Performance and Style* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 111-30.
'The Original Bob Cranky?' *Folk Music Journal*, (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1985), Vol 5, No 1, 48-82.
'The making of the Tyneside Concert Hall,' *Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Vol 1, 27-56.
'Thomas Allan and "Tyneside Song",' in Thomas Allan, *Allans' Illustrated Edition of Tyneside Songs* (Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1972), iii-xxix.
'John Bell, the "Great Collector",' in John Bell, *Rhymes of Northern Bards* (Newcastle: Frank Graham, 1971), iii-lix.

Ed Waugh has written a play based on *Cat-Gut Jim the Fiddler* and it will tour in summer 2017.

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Dave Harker and Joseph Wilkes, Ned Corvan's great-grandson, at Corvan's unmarked grave under a crumbling tarmac path in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Jesmond.

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